THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW VOLUME CX NUMBER 658 OCTOBER 1951 FIVE SHILLINGS

DAVID WHITEHEAD FABRICS

D. Whitehead Ltd., Higher Mill, Rawtenstall, Lancs.

and

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London, W.1.

ONE OF THE DAVID WHITEHEAD GROUP

Design for a Nursery Schoolroom. From the original Collage by R. Myerscough-Walker

The modern Nursery Schoolroom calls for comfort and colour. The floor must also stand hard wear and constant cleaning. It must be hygienic and waterproof, yet warm and not tiring to young feet. In this unusual design, Marley floor tiles have been used to provide an inexpensive solution to all these problems.

Cock o' the walk

The Marley Tile Co. Ltd., London Rd., Riverhead, Sevenoaks, Kent. Sevenoaks 2251-6

MARLEY

Photograph by courtesy of "The Architectural Review"

PIMLICO HOUSING SCHEME

for the City of Westminster.

Architects: Powell & Moya, A/A.R.I.B.A.

Consulting Civil Engineers: Scott & Wilson, M/M.I.C.E.

GENERAL CONTRACTORS:

HOLLOWAY BROTHERS

(LONDON) Limited

Building and Civil Engineering Contractors

MILLBANK **WESTMINSTER**


METAL WINDOWS
WILLIAMS
CHESTER

Pimlico polygon...

a hot water accumulator that delights the eye! A 16-sided tower glazed by Aluminex Patent Glazing houses the hot water accumulator of the Pimlico District Heating Scheme of the Westminster City Council.

When a hot water accumulator tank 29 ft. in diameter and 126 ft. high is set cheek by jowl with blocks of new flats, something special, obviously has to be done about its appearance. Something, indeed, has been done, and to some purpose, to the hot water accumulator of the Pimlico District heating scheme. The remarkable photographs in these pages show how Aluminex Patent Glazing was used in accomplishing these three prime requirements of:

1 — **providing an aesthetic finish;**
2 — **protecting the accumulator and its lagging;**
3 — **providing a measure of additional heat insulation.**

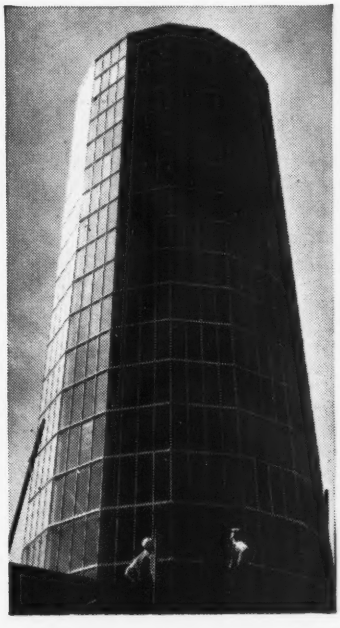
In particular the architects desired that the accumulator enclosure should have a light and airy appearance and harmonise with the design of the flats in the surrounding estate.

It was with these considerations in mind that they chose Aluminex Patent Glazing—the modern, all-aluminium system—for the tower cladding. The Architects built round the accumulator a 16-sided steel tower glazed with rough cast glass panes, 6 ft. × 1 ft 9 ins., set in Aluminex patent glazing bars.

These are the normal Aluminex glazing bars as used in the Brabazon Assembly Hall, motor factories, steel works and other industrial structures large and small.

In this application of versatile Aluminex however, the tee-shaped glazing bars have been set to face inwards. This permitted the glazing to be placed from the inside, doing away with the need for scaffolding. Moreover this arrangement suited the wind conditions for the wind suction is much greater than pressure.

The manufacturers of Aluminex, Williams & Williams Ltd., carried out tests showing that the glass would not break until a suction of 65 lbs. per square foot was reached and that the Aluminex continuous spring glazing strip inside would not give way under a pulsating outside pressure varying up to a maximum of 45 lbs. per square foot. It was therefore clear that there was an ample margin of safety, since the maximum design suction is 50 lbs. per square foot and the maximum design pressure is 30 lbs. per square foot.



It is, however, from the point of view of appearance that the choice of Aluminex has been so notably justified. Aluminex is essentially a neat and precise glazing system. The bars are extruded to a design which represents the strictest adaptation of shape to function. The Aluminex engineers who designed it re-thought "dry glazing" from basic principles. The components and fixings are equally simple, efficient and functional. The result is that, in such structures as the Pimlico tower, when clean, precise lines play an important part in the aesthetic effect of the finished building, Aluminex presents invaluable advantages.

Aluminex Division *of* **Williams & Williams Ltd.,** *Reliance Works, Chester*

Architects: *Messrs. Powell and Moya, AA.R.I.B.A.* **Chartered Civil Engineers:** *Messrs. Scott & Wilson.* **Consulting Engineers:** *Messrs. Kennedy & Donkin*

Downe Manor Primary School, Ealing, Middlesex
Architect: C. G. Stillman, F.R.I.B.A.,
County Architect, Middlesex County Council

R.93

The Specification of the Ruberoid System of Roofing for much of the School Building Programme testifies not only to the dependability of Ruberoid and its low cost per year of service but also to the speed with which the work can be executed.

There are suitable weatherproofing specifications to meet the requirements of all types of Industrial, Educational and Private buildings with flat, pitched or curved roofs.

Architects and Engineers are invited to write for the technical brochures which describe these specifications in detail.

THE RUBEROID COMPANY LIMITED, 103, COMMONWEALTH HOUSE, NEW OXFORD STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

Branches: Manchester, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Belfast

Photograph by courtesy of the Director of Education, Glasgow Corporation.

Lloyd Concealed Fixing for Ceilings

An unused hall of the 1937 Scottish Exhibition has been transformed into the 1951 Palace of Arts at Glasgow's Festival of Britain by the use of grooved Lloyd Boards, ¾" deep and 2' square, bearing on Tee-flanges. The boards form a light and airy-looking ceiling beneath which thousands promenade. It's one of three new ways with ceilings—Concealed Fixing, Alloy Fixing, and Talon Fixing—and Bowaters Building Boards Limited supply them all. (N.B. It's Lloyd *Insulation* Board, so it saves steel, fuel, is simple to apply and reflects light.)

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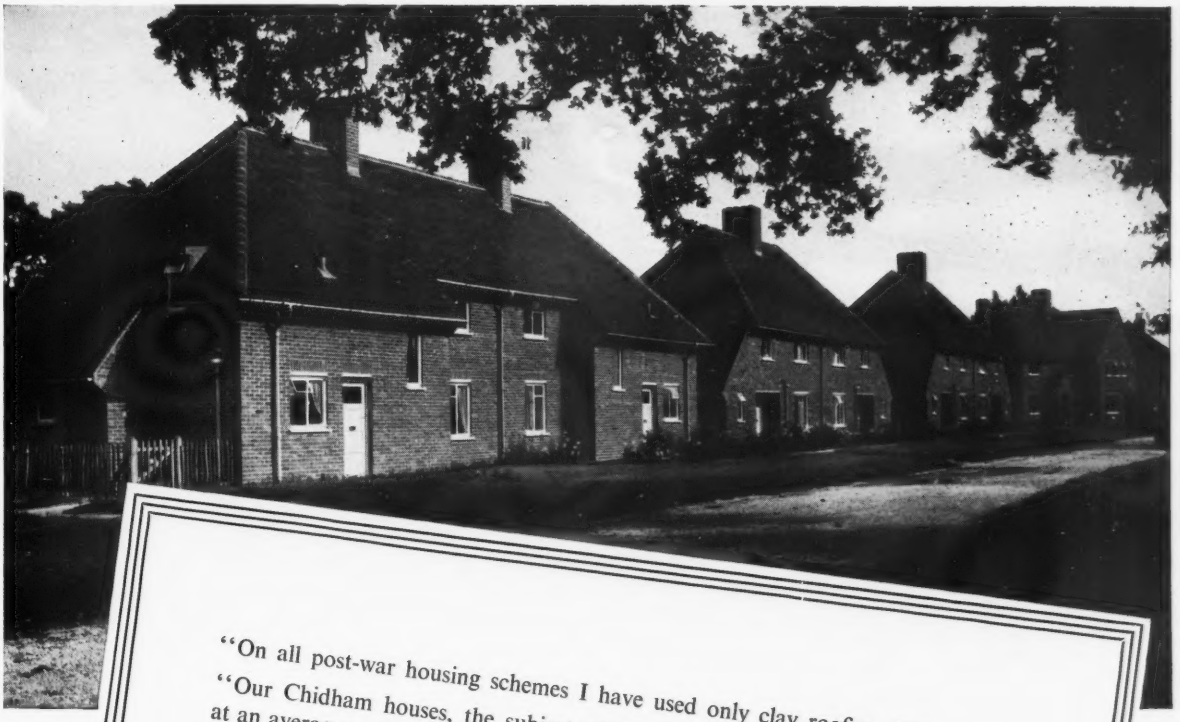
Harewood House, Hanover Square, London, W.1. Tel: Mayfair 9266

Issued by: ASSOCIATED BOWATER INDUSTRIES LIMITED, a member of the Bowater Organisation.



"On all post-war housing schemes I have used only clay roofing tiles.

"Our Chidham houses, the subject of the award*, were all completed in 1949 at an average cost of £1,240 per house of three bedrooms with two separate living rooms. This cost compares very favourably with the figure of £1,321 given in the second report of the Girdwood Committee as the average cost for the whole country, and it compares still more favourably with the average cost in the Home Counties, including this area, which is reported to be £1,462 per house."

Extract from a letter received from Mr. J. K. Lawson, F.R.I.C.S., A.M.I.S.E., Engineer and Surveyor, Rural District Council, Chichester.

* Ministry Housing Medal.

For information on Clay Roofing Tiles, please apply to The Secretary, The National Federation of Clay Industries, Drayton House, London, W.C.1. (Euston 2568)

ALDWYCH HOUSE, ALDWYCH, LONDON, W.C.2. *Telephone: HOLBorn 6949*

Architects : Sir John Burnet Tait & Partners

Completed on time for the opening of the Festival, the Tube Station Festival Booking Office stands as a fine example of one of the Upstream Buildings, all of which were constructed by the Main Contractors.

Consulting Engineers : Freeman Fox & Partners

Richard
COSTAIN
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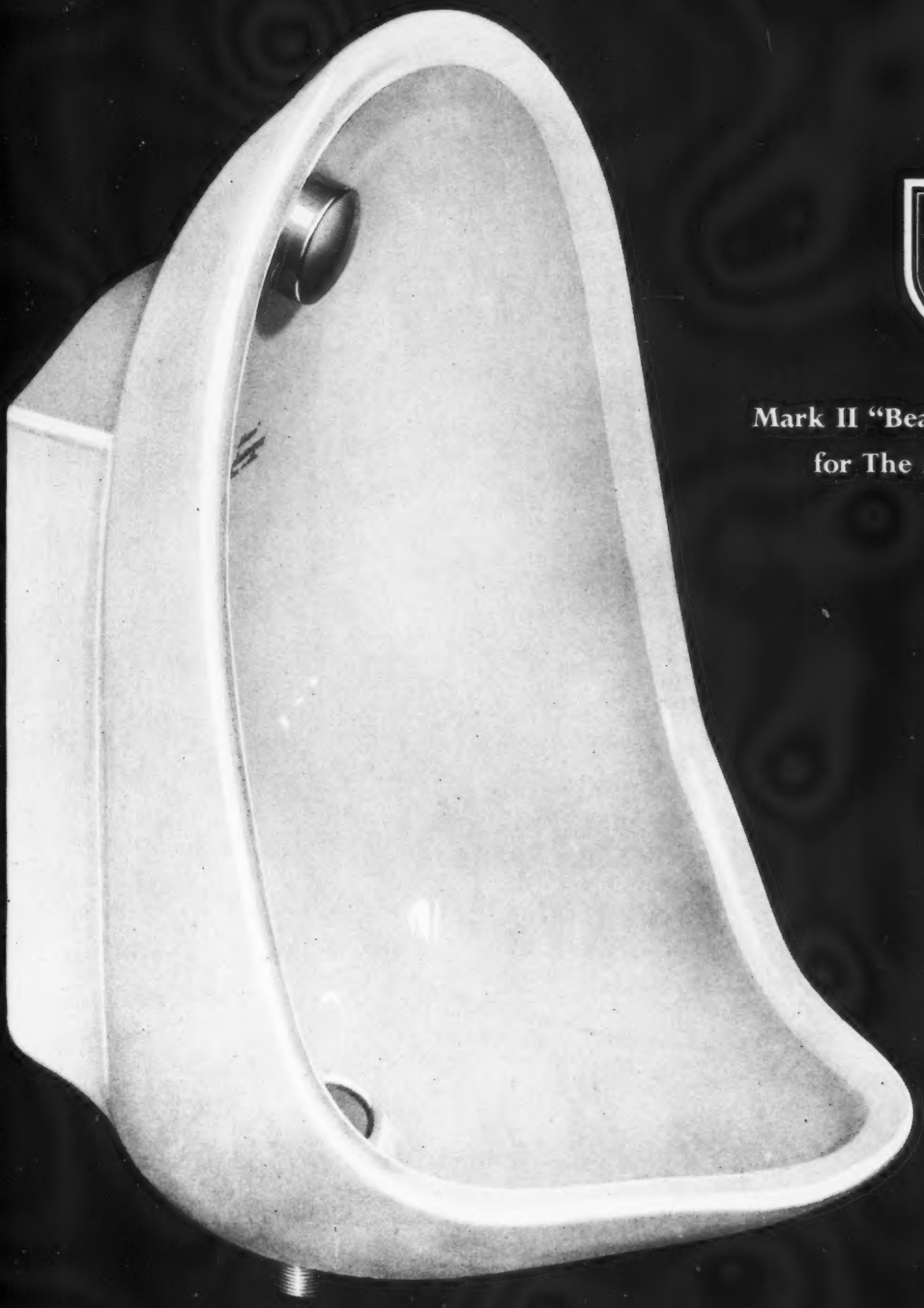
Building & Civil Engineering Contractors



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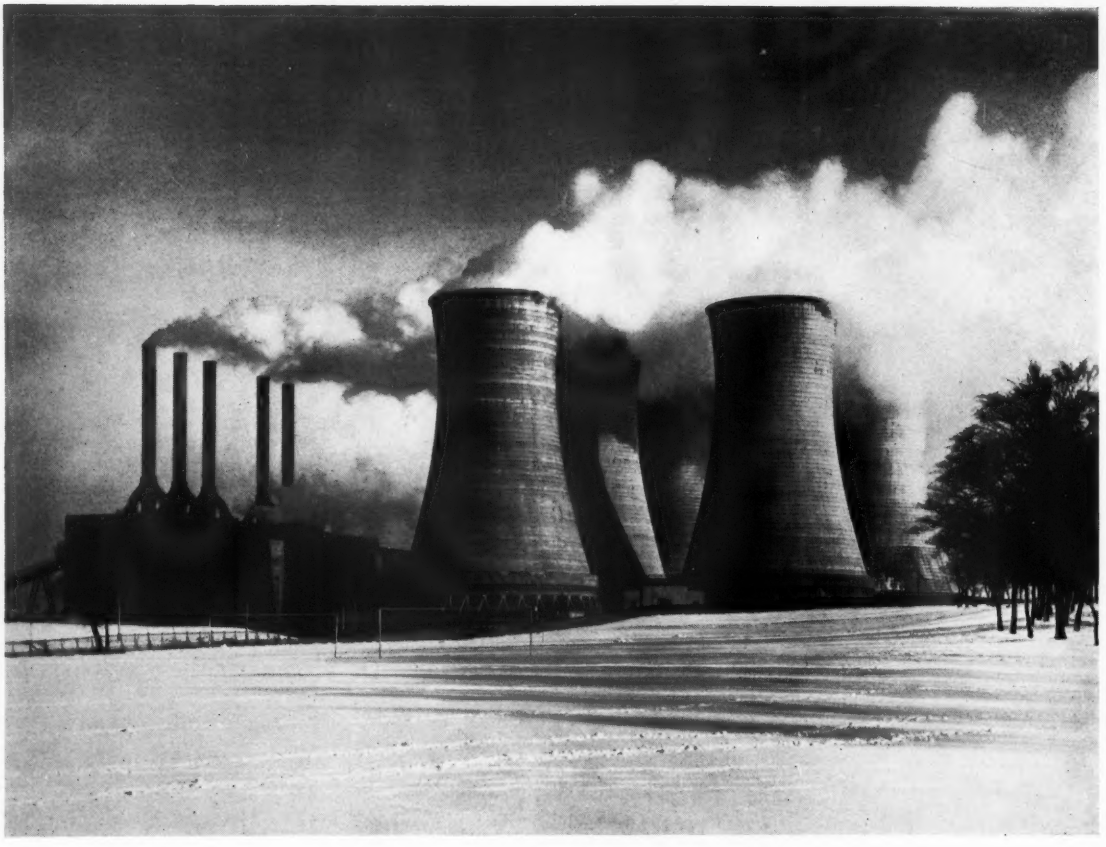

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FOR THE BRITISH ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY, MIDLANDS DIVISION

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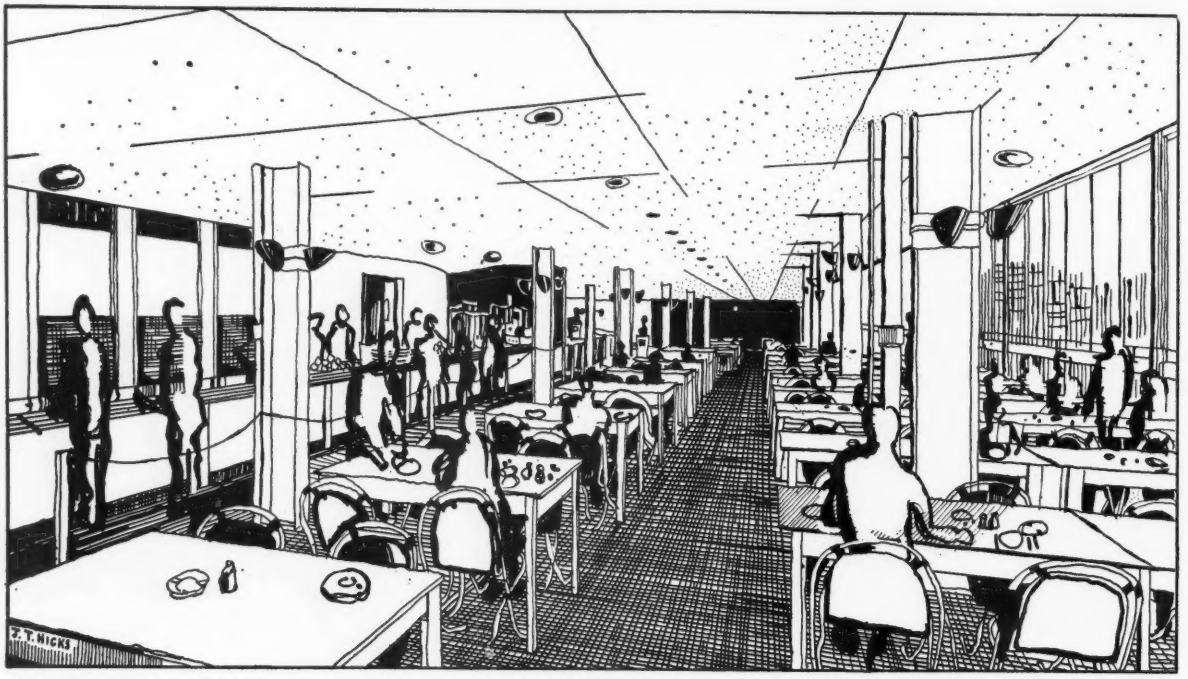
SM/BE. 313a

CELOTEX LOOKS BACK AT THE GREAT EXHIBITION 1851

The Amazon, by Kiss

"The colossal group of an Amazon attacked by a tigress is one of the marvels of the Exhibition . . . though at the same time, it is not entitled to rank with works in the highest class of sculpture" (*'Contents of the Crystal Palace', London 1852*). The operative word, then, must have been 'colossal' for the Victorians liked solidity and bulk. One wonders what they would have made of our modern preference for lightweight materials. Would the architect of 1851 have recognised in Celotex those qualities which have made it so important a factor in modern building construction? Probably not. Yet these same qualities, of lightness, strength and thermal insulation, are today being used to good purpose in buildings of every kind.

CELOTEX LIMITED, NORTH CIRCULAR ROAD, STONEBRIDGE PARK, LONDON, N.W.10



An impression of the Staff Canteen in the South Bank Administration Building. *Architect: Edward D. Mills, F.R.I.B.A., F.R.S.A.*

Gas Caters for the South Bank Staff

In addition to providing the main source of heat for cooking and hot water in the various restaurants, buffets and cafés which cater for the needs of visitors to the South Bank Exhibition, gas is used exclusively in the preparation of meals and refreshments for the entire Exhibition Staff of some 1,200.

The sketch shows part of the cafeteria service canteen which seats 400 and serves full meals. This is situated on the third floor of the general administration building which incorporates lavatories, rest rooms, cloakrooms, workshops and offices.

There is also a self-service snack bar and an executives' dining room, which brings the total seating accommodation up to approximately 600.

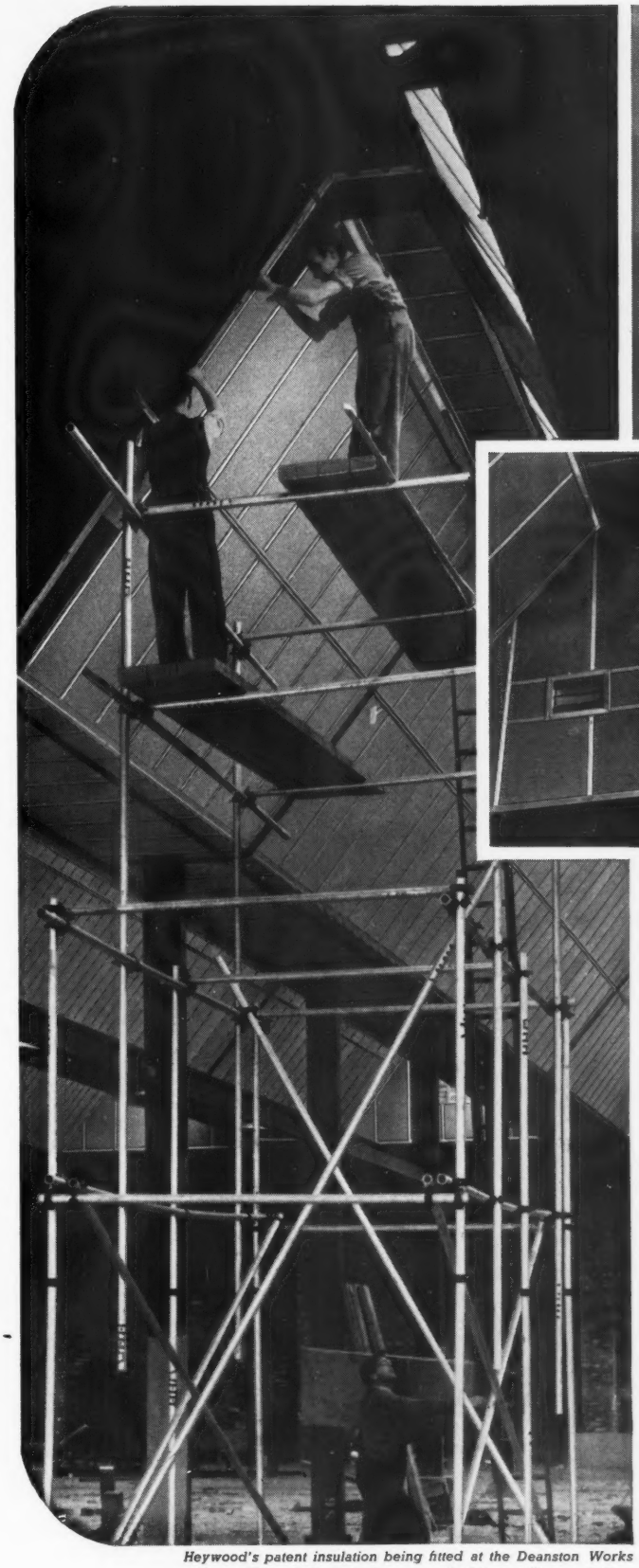
The restaurant facilities are available all day for the staff, and certain facilities are available for those on the night shift.

The needs of these essential services are fully met by the reliability of gas at all times and its ability to meet widely fluctuating demands economically.

Helpful information on the many aspects of providing efficient services for cooking, hot water, space heating and refrigeration may be obtained from local Gas Undertakings.

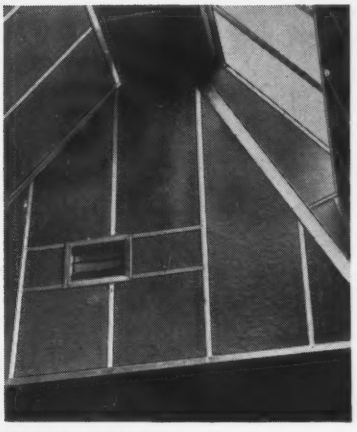
GAS

ISSUED BY THE GAS COUNCIL, 1, GROSVENOR PLACE, LONDON, S.W.1. *TELEPHONE: SLOANE 4554*



Heywood's patent insulation being fitted at the Deanston Works of James Finlay & Co. Ltd., Doune. Architects: Messrs. Cullen, Lochhead & Brown, 119 Cadzow Street, Hamilton, Lanarkshire.

Keep the Heat Inside



Retain *all* the heat inside the building, cutting costs and fuel consumption. Heywood's system of patent insulation constructed by experts close-seals all roof surfaces at every junction—transforming "ice boxes" into warm, comfortable workshops, also keeping them cool in summer. Heywood's patent insulation needs no maintenance, and if incorporated in new buildings effects considerable economies in heating plant installation.

Heywood's

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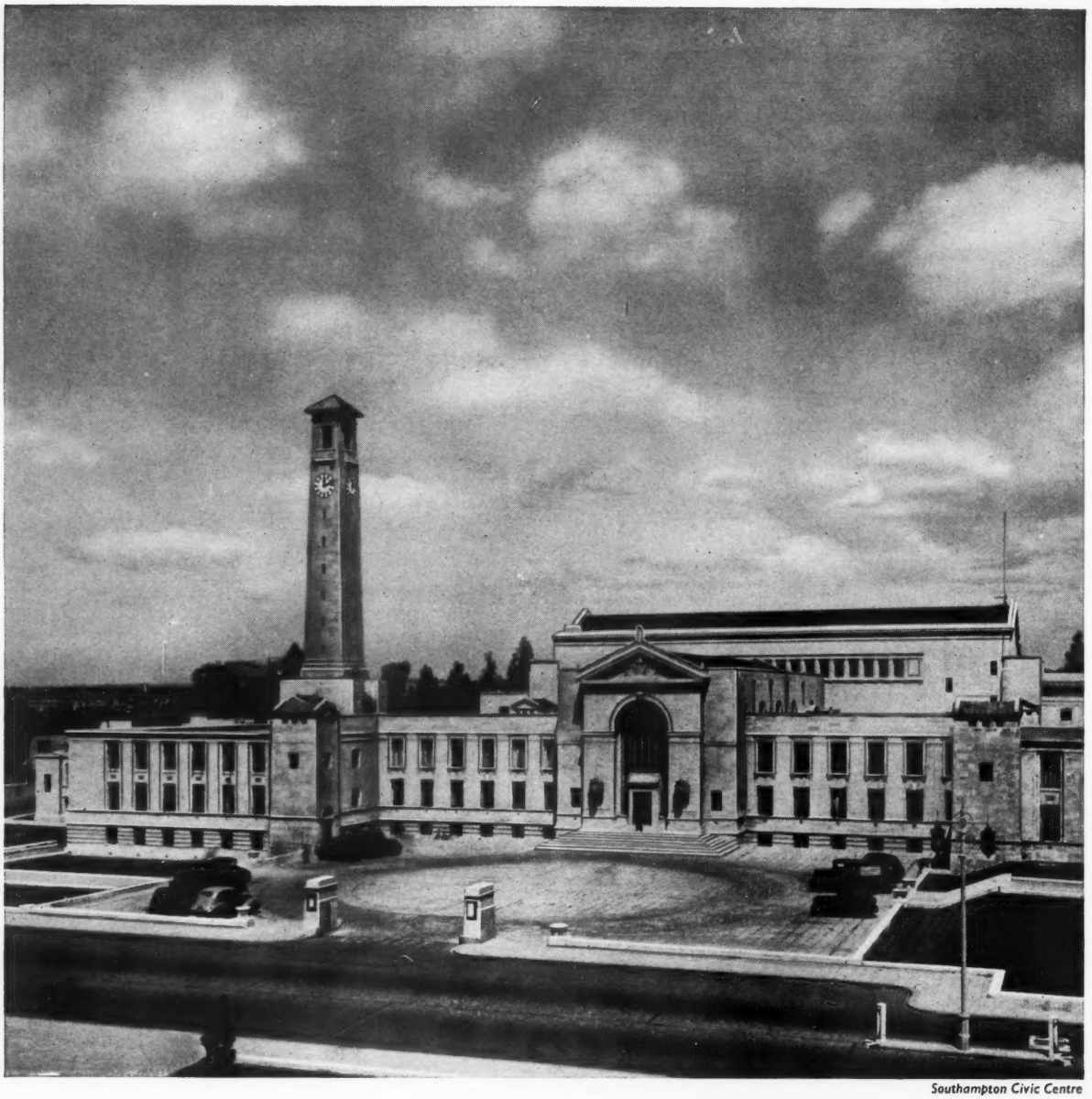

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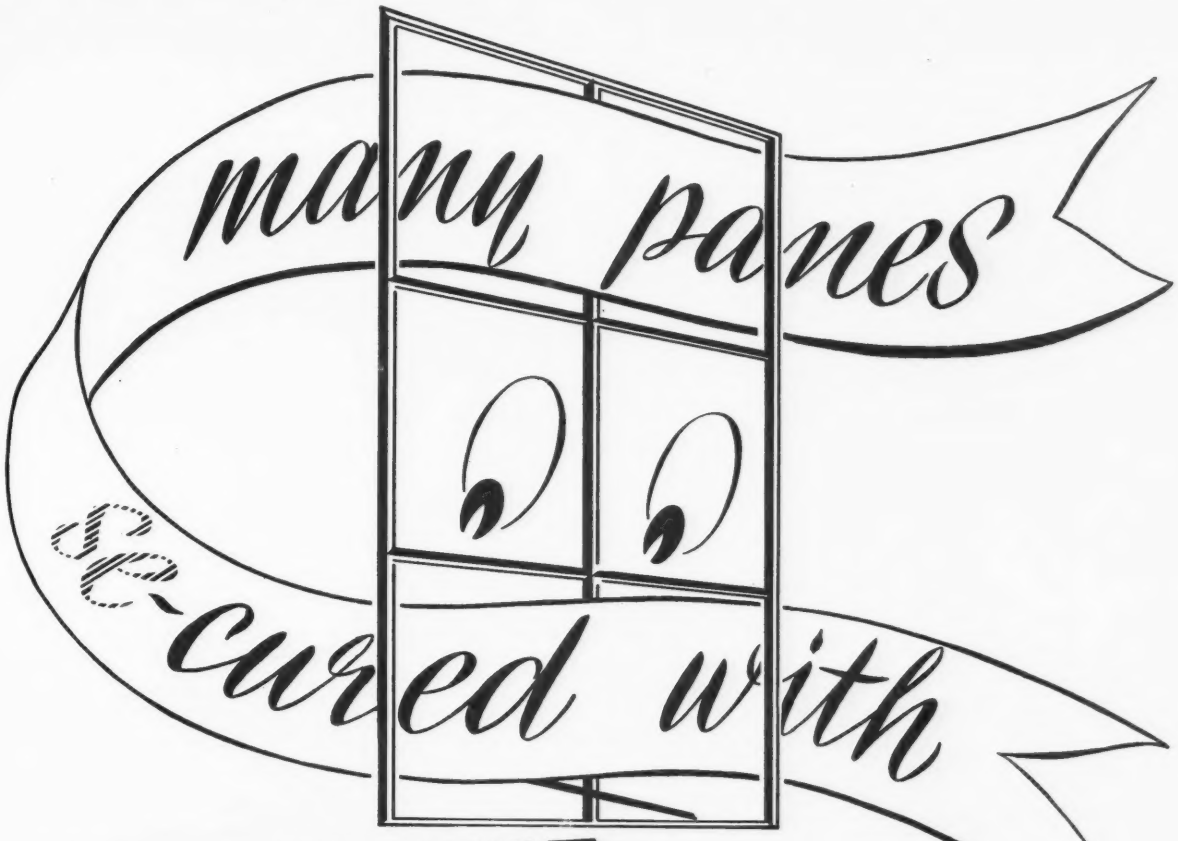

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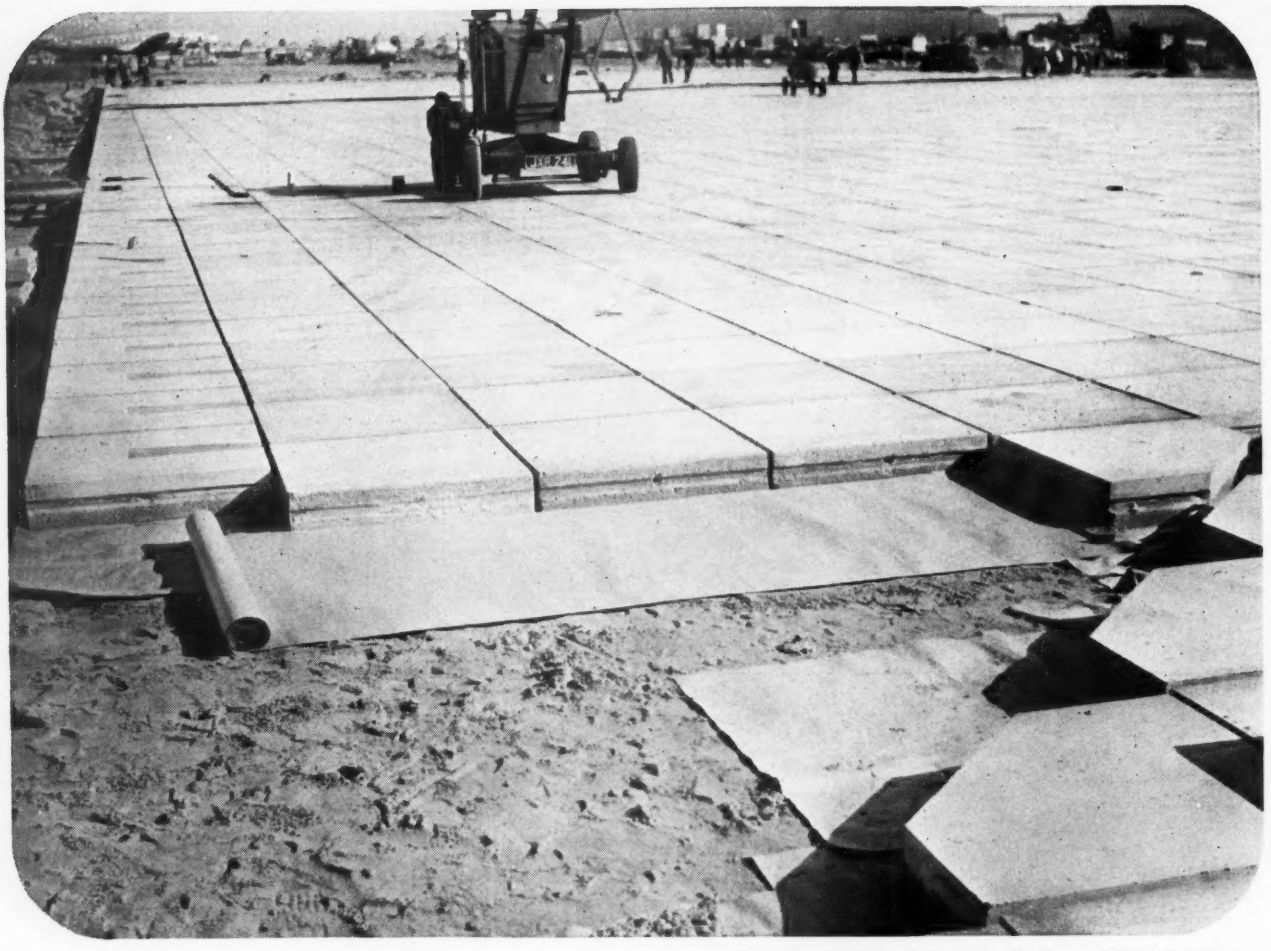

Photo. by kind permission of the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
Contractors: George Wimpey & Co. Ltd.

London Airport takes to SISALKRAFT

The illustration depicts the experimental length of ***prestressed concrete taxi track*** recently undertaken by the Ministry of Civil Aviation at London Airport.

After the formation had been suitably compacted a 2″ bed of sand was spread over the paved area and SISALKRAFT Reinforced Waterproof Building Paper (Standard grade) utilised to ensure that the precast slabs had complete freedom of movement, both during and after stressing of the cables. Indeed a function to test even the performance of SISALKRAFT.

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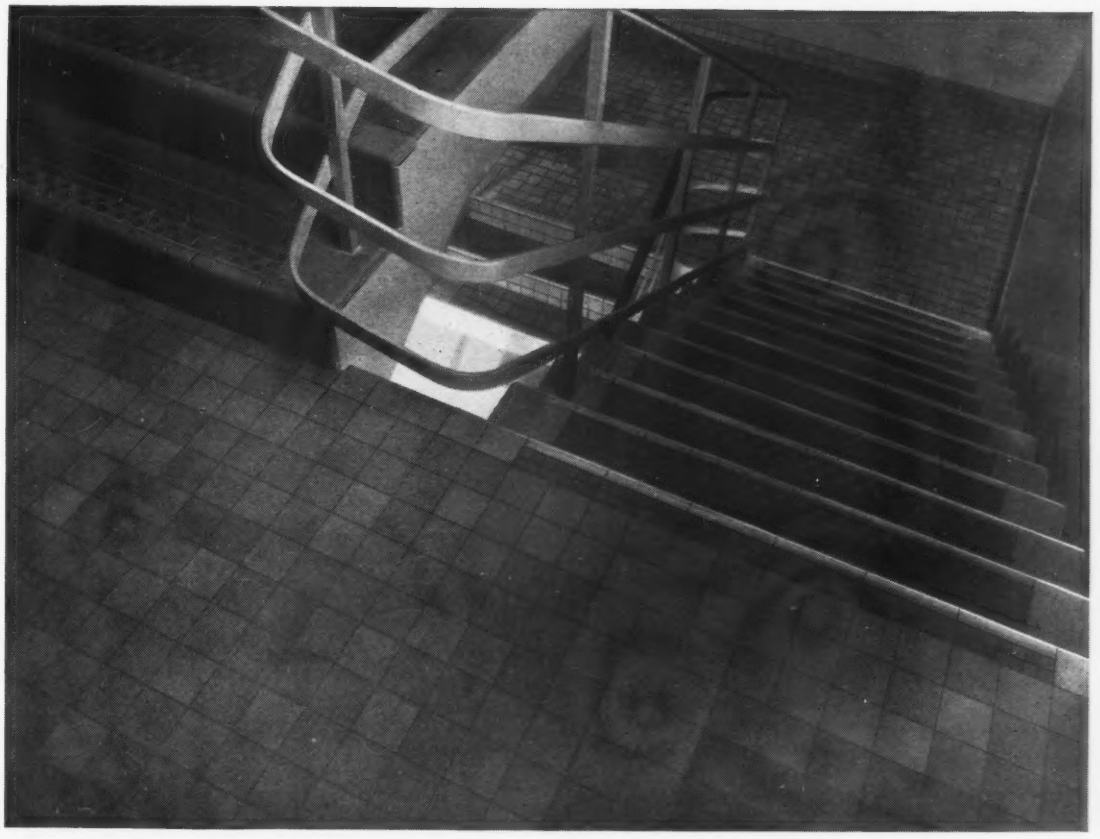
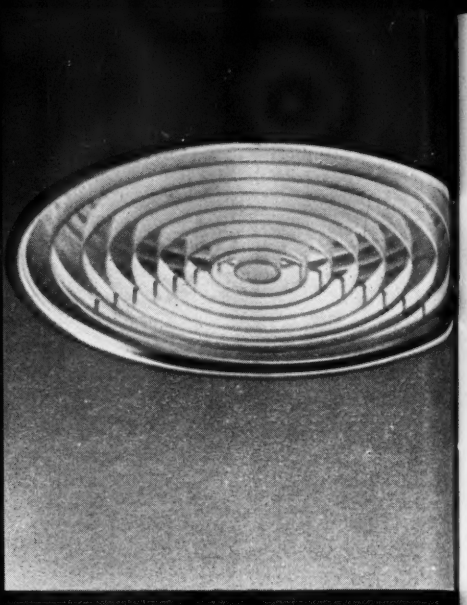


Tiled Staircase and landings at The Ursuline Convent, Ilford.
Contractors: J & R Rooff Ltd. under the supervision of
Cogan & Partners, Quantity Surveyors.

.1200 RECESSED CEILING. Finishes : off-white ; uter ring, satin aluminium. Lamp : 150 watt reflec- or spot or floodlight, for display.

F.905/F TABLE LAMP. Satin brass and White flashed opal glass. Shade : convex-reeded, off-white grained plastic.



F.922 RECESSED CEILING. Finishes : reflec anodised aluminium ; louvres, off-white. La 300/500 watts.

The Mondolite range of electric lighting fittings includes several that have proved so successful in the past, together with many new designs of particular merit which we have recently added. Wherever possible component parts have been made interchangeable giving great flexibility in design and purpose. This has been made possible by large scale production to precise manufacturing standards. Illustrated here are some examples of the Mondolite range. The complete range can be seen at the Lighting Centre in Knightsbridge, where you can also see our other ranges, Tubalux (fluorescent), Ultralux, and Versalite.

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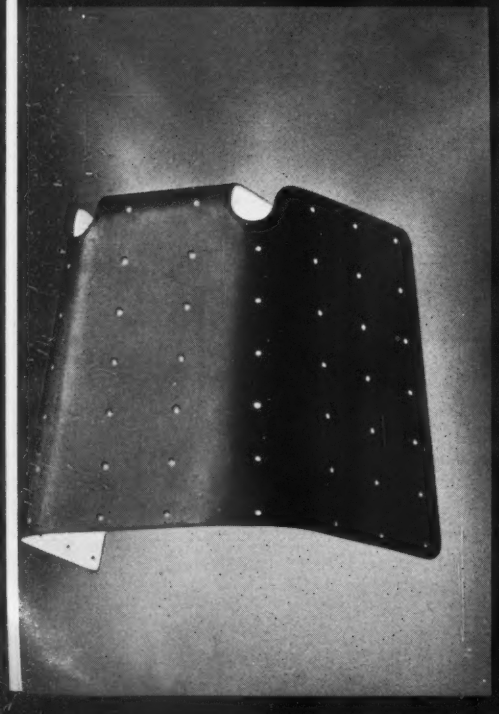
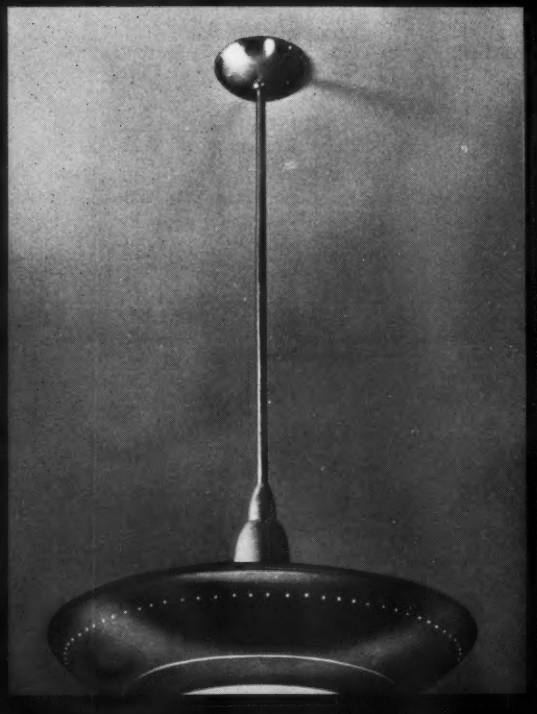
.954 WALL BRACKET. Dimensions : 7½" x 6" x 5". inish : satin aluminium. Lamp : 60 watts.



F.816 PENDANT. Finishes : bowl support and ceiling plate, off-white ; lamp housing and bowl, gilt anodised aluminium ; suspension, satin brass. Dust cover : obscured glass. Lamp : 200 watts.



F.936 CEILING. Finish : all off-white. Dust c obscured glass. Lamp : 300/500 watts.

Warmth throughout the small home . . .

In the small home, comfortable warmth throughout the entire house is ensured by the Ideal Neofire. This cheerful open fire has a specially designed boiler which heats up to three radiators in other rooms and in addition supplies abundant hot water for baths and other domestic uses.

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IDEAL NEOFIRE

The open fire that warms 3 other rooms

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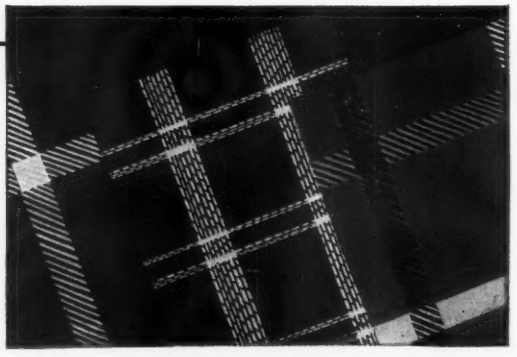
It's washable. *Tygan can be wiped clean with a damp cloth as easily as a glass-top table. Being non-absorbent it is never damp.*



Attractive colours and designs. *The lovely clear colours and smart designs in which Tygan is available afford every opportunity for the achievement of successful decorative effects.*

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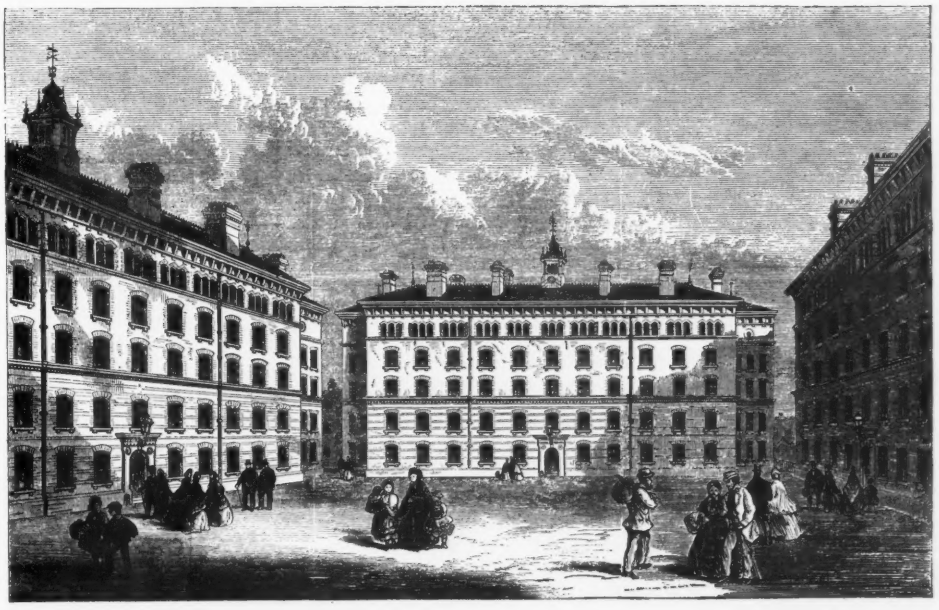

1865 . . .

Flats in Peabody Square, Islington, erected through the bounty of an American merchant and built by us to the design of Mr. H. A. Darbishire.

1950 . . .

Kerridge Court, Islington. Eight blocks of flats built by us in 1950 for the Islington Borough Council. The scheme comprises 130 flats and a communal laundry. Architects: Messrs. E. C. P. Monson, F/A.R.I.B.A.

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Consulting Engineers: Messrs. Kennedy & Donkin.

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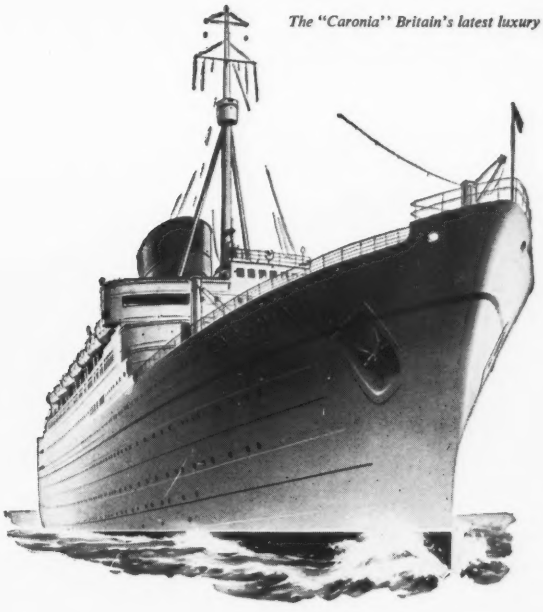

The "Caronia" Britain's latest luxury liner

to-day's latest achievement will make way for greater developments to-morrow

What is so new today—what makes men stare in awe at their own achievement, will be replaced by something that is newer to-morrow. This is inevitable. Just as inevitable as the fact that aluminium is part of this process of progress. Engineers, designers and technicians are finding that when they have a problem to solve, aluminium is the metal that helps to solve it.

Progress has brought ever-increasing new uses of aluminium. Keeping pace with these developments requires adequate supplies of this light metal, produced in the most economical manner through an integration of the many stages of production from the mining of bauxite, shipping of raw materials and generating of hydro-electric power, to the ultimate extraction and fabrication of the metal—all assisted by research, technical and commercial services. This co-ordination is achieved through Aluminium Limited, the Canadian Parent Company, whose subsidiaries are located chiefly in the British Commonwealth.

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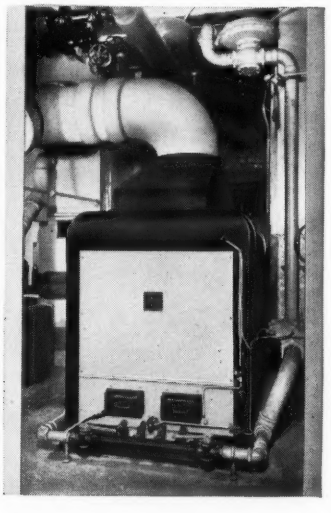

Heating installation by

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(GAS DIVISION)

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THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

Volume 110 Number 658 October 1951

The Cover The recent exhibition of scientific models, photographs and drawings at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, entitled *Growth and Form*, afforded a welcome opportunity of entering that 'new landscape' which modern science has opened up for the artist but which the ordinary amateur of the arts seldom finds himself in. One of the exhibits, a micro-photograph of molybdenum oxide smoke, is reproduced on the cover this month, while photographs of the exhibition itself appear on pages 216 and 273 within.

216 **Frontispiece**

217 **Man-made America. A reply to the Magazine of Building** In December, 1950 THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW devoted a special number to the man-made environment in the United States of America. The purpose of this number was not to condemn America because the American environment is chaotic—as indeed is that of industrialized nations everywhere—but to draw attention to the fact that the chaos is increasing and that the American nation as a whole seems quite unconcerned about it. The REVIEW never doubted that there were many individuals in America who were deeply concerned—and the letters received as a result of *Man-made America* show that there are—but it had failed to discover evidence that such men of good will were being given a fair chance. Part of the trouble, the REVIEW suspected, was that the spectacle of unprecedented material progress had induced a state of complacency amounting almost to self-hypnosis. This suspicion has since been confirmed in a curious way by an editorial article on *Man-made America* in the American *Magazine of Building*. The article is reprinted here, together with the REVIEW's reply in the form of a restatement of the case for treating townscape as an art, as opposed to treating towns as a necessary evil.

221 **U S Domestic**

233 **Space Left over: making the Best of the Odd Corner** In every town a very considerable amount of space is taken up by odd pieces of ground left over when a road is widened, a new building line established, a memorial statue or drinking fountain set up. In size these 'pocket handkerchief' spaces vary from areas just big enough for a bench and a tree to those in which several dozen people can pass their leisure moments. Festival of Britain year, with the determination that it has produced to make Britain's towns brighter and tidier places, has made people newly aware of these odd spots; unfortunately the treatment which they have received as a result of this has shown a singular disregard of their potential contribution to the urban environment. Since it is a subject on which the town planning textbooks are silent, the REVIEW here supplies a guide to the treatment of 'pocket size' spaces illustrated with paired examples of how and how not to do it.

243 **Flats at Pimlico, London: Pumphouse and Workshops** *Architects: Powell and Moya*

249 **Proposals for Trafalgar and Leicester Squares** It has been said that Trafalgar Square occupies 'the finest site in Europe'; yet it is generally agreed that as an attempt at a piece of monumental townscape it is a failure. An exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts of town planning studies by students of the Polish University College School of Architecture in London, under the direction of Professor Konrad Smigielski, includes proposals for the replanning of the Trafalgar Square–Leicester Square area. These seem so much to the point that the REVIEW publishes four of them here, together with its own suggestions illustrated by Donald Dewar Mills for developing the most important and immediately practicable proposal—the linking of the two squares by a pedestrian way and the sinking of the roadway along the north side of Trafalgar Square under the National Gallery terrace to make the two squares a combined pedestrian precinct.

253 **Current Architecture**

257 **Roger North and Sir Christopher Wren** *by Howard Colvin* The name of Roger North does not find a place in any architectural reference book. Yet its owner, who was born in 1653 and died in 1734, was not only the author of what H. M. Colvin here calls 'the most entertaining treatise on building in the English language' but also the designer of a well-known London building which has long been regarded as 'one of Sir Christopher Wren's finest minor works'—namely, the Middle Temple Gateway. Although North's treatise on building has been in the British Museum since 1883, Mr. Colvin's is the first published study of it.

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FIVE SHILLINGS

That modern science has provided the artist with a new subject matter, a 'new landscape' as it has been called, is a truism. It is a landscape, however, in which the ordinary amateur of the arts who is not a scientist seldom finds himself. For this reason the recent exhibition of scientific models, photographs and drawings at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, entitled Growth and Form, *offered a valuable enrichment of his visual experience. This photograph by Nigel Henderson shows a section of the exhibition, with examples of skeletal structure in the background. One of the exhibits is reproduced on the cover, and further photographs of the exhibition itself are on page 273.*

MAN MADE AMERICA

A REPLY TO THE MAGAZINE OF BUILDING

1 *introduction* In December 1950 the REVIEW devoted an entire issue to an analysis of the man-made environment in the United States of America. As with similar studies in the REVIEW, this one was part of a concerted effort to pin down the *malaise* that has attacked the environment of industrialized nations everywhere, destroying among whole societies not only the will to resist but even the ability to imagine what a state of health might be like. For in spite of all the work done by the experts in town-planning research and theory and in building new towns and housing estates, the predominant effect of our environment is still chaotic, and the chaos is encroaching far too fast to permit complacency because of the few isolated victories we have won over it.

Until December last the REVIEW'S attention had been directed chiefly at the state of the UK. Visual analysis of the environment required, we found, an eye trained in a field wider than the narrowly architectural,* and this eye coupled with the camera or brush to record its observations and the pen its reflections, was hard to come by. There is, however, a country whose language, history, fate and hopes are so closely linked with our own that thoughts and activities frequently run parallel. When the process of interaction is set up each serves to free the other from a mutual tendency towards parochialism. That country is the United States of America.

The REVIEW found the subject of townscape was no exception, though the parallel development of thought taking place in the U S had not as yet been encouraged to find a publishing outlet. With this, and other reasons (recapitulated on page 220) in mind, it was decided to provide an outlet in the REVIEW. It was decided in addition that the contributions from the other side of the Atlantic should be accompanied by an editorial commentary—one that should be as free and frank as the subject deserved and the close relationship between our countries, we thought, permitted.

That this commentary should have caused offence to the *Magazine of Building* we regret. If the correspondence received and published in the REVIEW is an indication, *Building's* reaction was, fortunately, not widespread. In view of the vital importance of the subject, however, it may be of value to answer some of the points made by *Building*, whose reply reveals a careless reading of our editorial commentary, an incomplete study of the articles and a misapprehension as to the whole aim of the issue. Reply and reprise are

*Though the architect of all specialists is the one, after the painter, who acquires most quickly the kind of enlarged vision these studies need.

printed below, and are followed by a general conclusion restating once again the dangers and opportunities that arise because of the neglect into which the art of townscape has everywhere fallen—a neglect which we believe is evidence of troubles going deeper than many care to admit.

2 reprinted from THE MAGAZINE OF BUILDING

For some years the more recondite among US architects had been quietly enjoying their subscriptions to THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW *of London. Its attitude was civilized and its view world-wide. But late January these doting Americans received a heavy jolt. The* REVIEW *had set forth on the war path directly against them; its special December issue had been intended, so the* REVIEW *said, 'to investigate the* mess that is [*1*] America, *to attempt to discover why it has happened, and what, if anything, is to be done about it.'*

From there on out these stunned US readers were to experience how an innocent savage feels when set upon by an outraged and consecrated missionary [*2*].

But the ultimate outcome was the realization that the art of creating a visually decent America calls for a new declaration of independence, a fresh use of uniquely American dynamics [*3*].

Rarely had a cultural publication, published in a friendly country, issued so wholesale a condemnation of American civilization as appeared in THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW of London.

Said the REVIEW, 'The picture that a nation creates of itself out of, and upon, its landscape is a more realistic self-portrait than any of us like to admit.' As for the picture of the US [*4*], 'never before in ten thousand years has Western man . . . created the kind of squalor we are talking about here—the hygienic but visually scrofulous wasteland which in the US [*5*] is the universal embodiment of Progress, twentieth century style. . . .'

'Is there in any real sense,' asked the REVIEW, 'an American scene, an American landscape, even an American dream of an American scene?' Its answer, no [*6*]; the art was non-existent. 'It will take well into the twenty-first century, perhaps, for our brothers-in-dirt to make over the whole of their superb inheritance into a combination automobile graveyard, industrial no-man's land and Usonian Idiot's Delight.'

Thus spake the REVIEW, implementing its attack with captive US artillery in the form of Walker Evans' photographs of scrawny Main Streets, Steinberg's inimitable cartoons of New York's most ridiculous pretensions, and other too-revealing indictments of America at her silly worst.

But little did the editors of the REVIEW realize, as they sat back to await the returns, how different would be the impact of their blast, upon thoughtful Americans, from the impact they had intended [*7*]. Setting forth to demonstrate that the US needs above all else a new wave of European influence (to carry it beyond materialism) the REVIEW ended by demonstrating the inadequacy to the occasion of both the insular scale and the Old-World tempo [*8*].

These thoughtful Americans were unreservedly thankful for the sharp reminder, from an outside source, that *some* of the 'mess' is really there. ('Let's be frank and admit that this country of ours is supremely ugly in its human setting as a whole,' had written a US author two years ago in the *AIA Journal;* 'we are building a tin-can civilization,' had declared AIA President Ralph Walker to every gathering of US architects he could reach.) Moreover, it was useful to be able to point out, to certain segments of the US business community (for example to the automobile industry) that ruthless practicality without regard to side-consequences, although it had done much to build a gangling young Republic into a force to contend with, must create 'bad public relations,' to say the least, for a country which has almost unwittingly become a world power, and which must make its bid not through wealth, and certainly not through bullying, but in the end through the silent appeal, to a world bigger than itself, of a flowering civilization.

Yet this was about the extent of the contribution [*9*]. For there were not only bad flaws, there was a basic and highly significant miscomprehension, in the REVIEW's prognosis.

The flaws could be dismissed as only natural. The REVIEW was, after all, building up the pride of its domestic readers rather more than it was seeking US betterment [*10*]. Hence its strange choice of Europe-rooted authors. 'Th' further ye can get away fr'm anny peeryod th' betther ye can write about it,' said Mr. Dooley—'ye are not subject to interruptions be people that were there' [*11*]. So it was probably in the cards that strong popular movements in the US, especially in house building, should be dismissed as *Heimatstil*, whilst cognate developments in cozy Switzerland or in compact pretty Sweden had been hailed in the REVIEW as the 'new empiricism.' It was, perhaps, to be expected that the editors should ignore the existence not only of Frank Lloyd Wright's passion, but what was much more important, the roots of that passion in the America of Walt Whitman [*12*].

Other faults were more serious. Had writer Weisman (also an expert on Mediæval Manuscript Painting) been more cosmically oriented, he could not have sneered at Rockefeller Center as 'fourteen buildings tied together by a dollar sign'; he would have noted how economic forces were there socialized and turned civic; he could not have missed the great scale at which formal concepts were realized which Le Corbusier had, as yet, been unable to lift off paper in Europe; and beyond that he would have observed, in a new context and for new purposes, recurrence of an old mediæval *method.* Over slow centuries the cathedrals had grown by meeting change with change; here in a swift decade it was proved that this method, the only one open to us, could result again in a strong rhythm and not incoherence. No thoughtful American accepts Rockefeller Center as an ultimate; but to throw away potential so magnificent and allow it to be lost through sheer non-recognition is not a contribution of the creative spirit.

This one example would have to stand, in a quick note, for the general tendency of the REVIEW's authors to vitiate their observation and stultify their thinking by close confinement within case-hardened European concepts [*13*].

Whatever else the REVIEW's exposition did, it forced the American who was concerned about his surroundings to think about his Continent in its most basic relationships [*14*]. To be sure America is and has been rooted in 'the West,' but America has been a torpedo-head. Its scale and tempo both lie outside European experience. In Europe even the era of science and industry fell upon a 'settled' civilization. America has by contrast been first, last, and always the continent of a *persistent high velocity of change,* matched nowhere except, perhaps, in some ways in modern Russia.* These rates are easy to forget.

An American baby born in 1790 would have belonged to a coastal agricultural country reaching west no farther than the

* The REVIEW has been extremely polite to architectural desuetude in Russia.

3 comments by the REVIEW

1, 'mess that is *man-made* America,' were our words.

2, if you felt like relative savages, we felt like savaged relatives after the footnote (see adjoining column) about our extreme politeness to Russia. Politeness certainly wasn't what the Russians called it. (See AR, March 1948.)

3. this was just our point, yet afterwards (paras. 5 and 14) you seem to suggest we were proposing exactly the opposite.

4, a legitimate editorial insertion, but evidence of what would seem to be excessive self-persecution, since we followed up your next quotation by saying 'the disease . . . is widespread in every industrialized society.'

5, we would let the last point go but for the fact that the words 'in the US,' which appear in your quotation from the REVIEW, did not appear in the REVIEW at all. They were added by your writer, thus again doing yourselves much less than justice.

6, the answer was not 'no'—there was no single answer. We were asking Americans, including *Building* for that. The purpose of the issue was to frame the question, and to allow a few contributors to start answering it from their different standpoints. As we explained (p.341) 'The idea is ambitious and one that can be no more than introduced in an issue like this—the REVIEW's object is more than satisfied if it starts something others will take up in more detail.' We hoped, as it proved, in vain, that *Building* might take it up in detail.

7, The reaction of *The Magazine of Building* and the news magazine *Time* have been very different from what we intended, but in all other replies, written or verbal received as yet, the impact was just as we had hoped.

8 from the REVIEW special issue p. 341 'To the thoughtful European the trouble with the US is not that it has spurned, but that it has not spurned the Old World.'

9, Thanks! If we did half that we're mighty proud.

10, Come over and see English cities sometime, and then repeat that.

11, Our reasons for choosing the authors we did was to *avoid* Europe—or America—rooted authors; they were selected, as far as possible, from those 'owing loyalties to both sides of the Atlantic'; the qualifications required were 'objectivity, sympathy and affection.' *Building's* reply persuades us that our choice was the right one.

12, All this might apply if the special issue, like former ones on Switzerland, Sweden, etc., had been concerned with modern architecture and its background. But we were careful to explain that that was just what it was not about (p. 414).

13. It is unfortunate that only one example (and an unflattering one to the US) had to stand as an example of the general tendency of the REVIEW's authors. For the argument was inevitably many sided and the issue close packed. We consider praise was overwhelmingly given by our authors, where praise was considered to be due (e.g., the Chicago River project; Grand Central Station and Fifth Avenue; TVA; new University-scapes; general technological advances as described by Kallmann).

14, Thanks again. This is just what we wanted to do. But we hoped your answer would already frame some of these thoughts, instead of merely pointing out the inadequacy of 'European cliché-thinking.' To quote again 'Our survey, as we have repeated continually, is a trial one, necessarily superficial,

Alleghanies. (Remember, editor Richards?) By the time he was 13 his country would have reached to the Mississippi. By the time he was 55 it would have incorporated California. Within one brief lifetime a whole continent embracing 3 million square miles (plus 3.7 million square miles in Canada) would have received its first pattern of modern habitation. If that man died in 1850 at the age of 60, another baby born the year of his death might easily have lived into the twentieth century. At the age of 24 this second man would have witnessed the completion of the first transcontinental railroad; and already the collisions of industrial change would have caused weeds to choke the walkways of the canals. By the time he was mature at 45, a steel technology would have been pushing up the first skyscrapers of big cities. If he died in 1910, the automobile would already have been well under way, destined to collide head-on with the age of steam, to alter the complete map of population growth, blight many of the most imposing centralized city areas, create a highway system of three million miles with 35 million individually controlled vehicles moving on it, and deeply affect the social habits of a nation which to-day counts 160 million people. For the population of the US in the century and a half since 1790—less than three life expectancies laid end to end—had grown not 41 per cent, but 41 *times*.

These differences in *rate*—along with countless others left unnoted—multiply themselves into a problem different in *kind*. America is the product of a three-fold jet propulsion. No European country shares the experience of having settled an empty Continent at the very moment of a tremendous population expansion. No European country had its birth at the precise moment of greatest force in the scientific-industrial revolution, in a territory of such boundless resources. (Between English industry and American there is a total difference of rhythm, between a steady settled pulse and a flaring racing surge of action.) No European country was born of the concurrent release of the energy and self-steering initiative of the common people. Might one not expect a man breaking in a wild bronco to spoil more grass than one hacking the ring on a well-trained riding horse [*15*]?

Both of them parts of the West, America and Europe should stand in a synergetic relation. But the REVIEW had proved the inadequacy of sermons couched in European cliché thinking. In the past, intelligent Americans have sought hard for betterment through French ideas of the City Beautiful, English ideas of the Garden City, German ideas of Master Planning; none of them have served us as more than shreds and patches. It is, perhaps, time to think harder about those elements of American experience *not* covered by Europe. The first of these is the *persistence of a high velocity of change*. Architecture, planning, and building should be soaked in a consciousness of the implications. In the realm of *pattern* we must be wary of precisely the best articulated and most elegantly polished European solutions—they can be ridiculous at our big scale, and are subject to the quickest obsolescence. We must dig into the almost untouched wealth—visual wealth—of indigenous devices such as the despised gridiron system; it has the homely virtue of Billson, the friend of Artemus Ward, who could 'balance in any direkshun' facing the certainty that the future was uncertain [*16*]. Our art must favour every invention that permits us to rest lightly on the earth, and *still* not be ramshackle.

Not a denizen of the ivory tower, this publication is alert for those fulcrum points where constructive improvement can perform a quick ju-jitsu. Against the howls of professional dilettantes, it has pressed a major campaign to obtain a suffusion of architectural skill in the great broad realm of merchant building. There has been no hesitation about showing pictures of dirty slums if this furthered great community movements for city-centre redevelopment (page 128). Since 1945 England has been slowly starting a series of well considered 'new towns.' The US can be glad for its lessons; but our technicians must devise means for keeping decent a whole series of new communities which must be occupied by 1952 though they are not yet started (page 122) [*17*].

Some final question remains as to what *is* ugly? There are great reservoirs of vitality even in honky-tonk [*18*]. Democracy has her victories. To paraphrase Whitman, *the gross and the soil'd she moves among need not make her gross and soil'd . . . she is none the less considerate or friendly therefore* [*19*].

whose object is to raise rather than end discussion. As such it makes sweeping accusations which may well turn out to be grotesque. Nevertheless, it makes them—in the cause of landscape theory, and in the hope also of getting the citizens of the US to look less at themselves and more at America.'

15, certainly one would expect it. The depressing thing for us is that we have created just as much mess breaking in our tamer bronco (surely one cannot equate even the industrial revolution in England with a well-trained horse). We didn't choose the US for this survey, as you seem to think we did, because its sins and omissions are not reflected in our own environment, but precisely because they are. 'To the frustrated ones in dingy old Britain,' we said, 'it sometimes seems that the US has learned nothing from the visual fate of England—' We weren't blaming you for making the mess, we were asking what you were going to do about it—not through academic curiosity either, but because your answer would have a good deal of relevance for us.

16, This is certainly hard to follow. Surely the gridiron only faces in four directions—that is one of its disadvantages. On the other hand, the point about being soaked in the implications of change is a good one, which we think was well made by our contributor Kallmann. The dangers and difficulties of this philosophy when taken to its extremes, we conjectured in some detail on p. 416, first column.

17, so must ours, for we are building towns (under LCC sponsorship among others) much more quickly than the much publicized and slow-to-grow New Towns. Our technicians must also devise means quickly for keeping them decent. What worries us is that we haven't devised means for making them more than decent—for making them works of art.

18, Agreed. As we said in a footnote (p. 385) 'Chaos has charms which the painter does a most useful job in isolating since it teaches the town planner much about the art of not tying up his design so tight as to preclude the citizen from making his own contribution in the shape of what is called accident.'

19, This paragraph seems to confuse æsthetics with sociology a little. Of course, the paraphrase of Whitman is absolutely true—the tenement rose and all that—but we should, perhaps, be careful to avoid justifying the tenement—or a squalid environment—just because democracy has been able precariously to survive in it.

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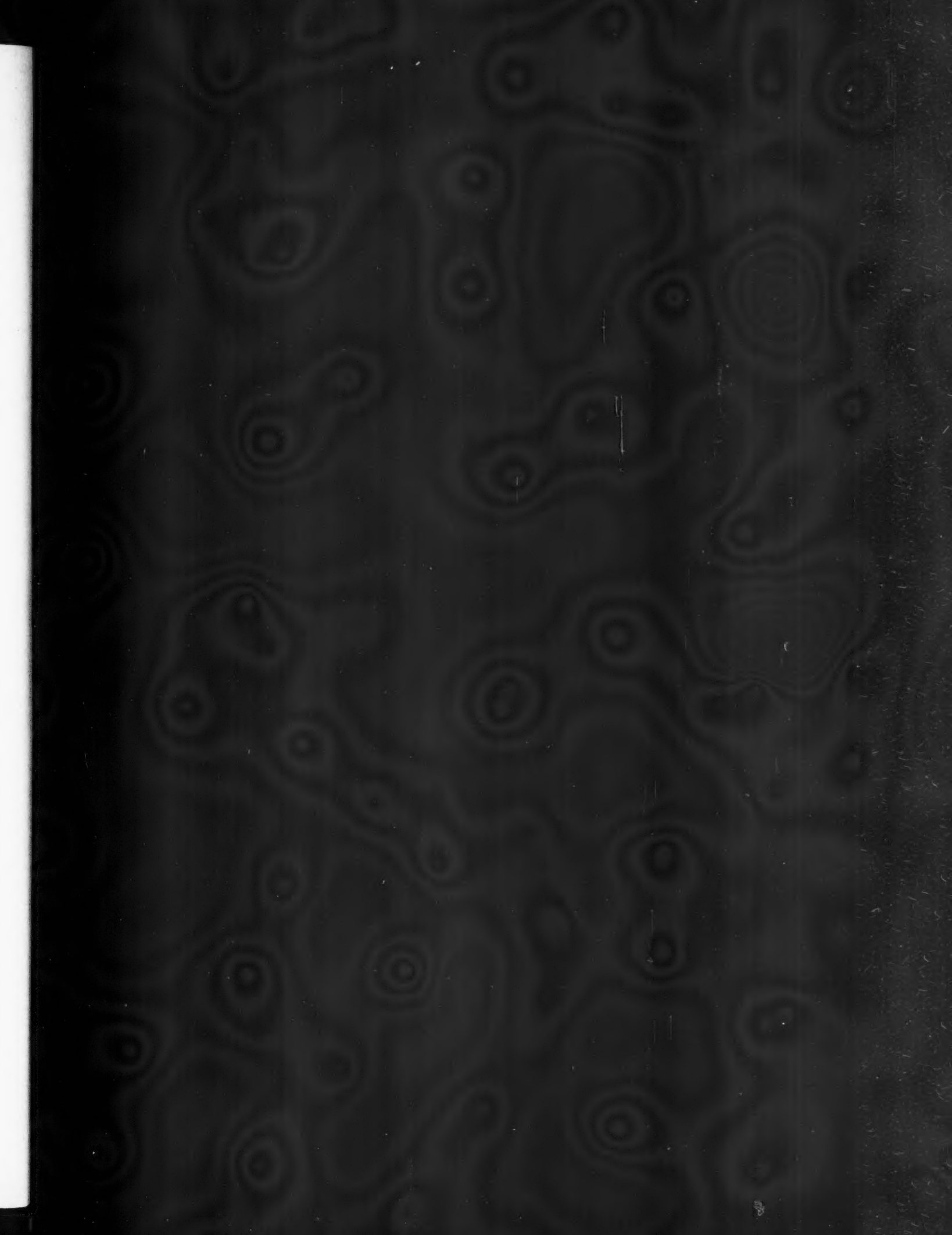
4 ***summing up*** The kernel of *Building's* argument would seem to be that in a continent with a 'persistent high velocity of change', the best one can do is face 'the certainty that the future is uncertain'. The most constructive point is the proposal 'to favour every invention that permits us to rest lightly on the earth, and *still* not be ramshackle'. What we over here would like to know is *how* America proposes to avoid the ramshackle, and what she is going to do (on her side) about the mess we have *both* inherited from the industrial revolution. We haven't discovered much evidence of a movement to clear up the mess in the USA, or to avoid making more mess in the future—at least not a sufficiently widespread one to make enough difference. Clearly there are a great many people who worry about it, who carry out research and make plans, but the odds against them are immense. And the attitude illustrated in *Building's* reply to the REVIEW is one of the biggest obstructions of all. For it points to a complacency (men-

tioned in the REVIEW, p.340), amounting almost to self-hypnosis. *Building* seems to be fascinated by the spectacle of speed, size and numbers (see for instance the paragraph which finishes 'the U S in . . . . less than three life-expectancies laid end to end—had grown not 41 per cent. but 41 *times*') and this fascination seems to have induced a kind of blindness to reality—and a violently hostile reaction towards anyone who disturbs the trauma.

If *Building* agrees with us that, to paraphrase Longfellow, humanity is hanging breathless on the fate of America, it just isn't good enough to fob it off with strings of numbers adding up to something we know already—the existence of a 'persistent high velocity of change'. What everyone wants to find out is the *methods* America is evolving for harnessing and guiding that 'torpedo head, triple jet propelled.'

Americans as well as ourselves can feel reasonably proud of the victories we have both won in the field of modern architecture—far though we still have to go. It should be remembered, however, that success was largely due to a minute reconsideration and, where necessary, redesign, of detail drawn to the last doorstop and finger-plate. It seems strange therefore that architects should still react so violently against the idea of doing the same thing in the wider sphere of town design. It is difficult to see how an architect who burns beneath the collar at one shoddy new building should preserve a glacial calm in face of miles of shoddy towns. But apparently there are those who do. This is particularly unfortunate if, as we believe, the design of towns and everything visible that goes to make them is the architect's responsibility, for he is bound to do himself much harm by shirking it. His professional status nowadays seems progressively to worsen, may this not be one of the reasons? The purpose of the REVIEW'S special number—and it seems necessary to reiterate it once again—was not to condemn America for having made a mess of her landscape but to draw her attention to the fact that the mess seems to be spreading and that few people seem concerned about clearing it up, let alone create works of art out of it. The *Canadian Builder* in a review by Alan H. Armstrong of *Man-made America*, summarized the argument as well as we could wish: 'The editors', it said, 'believe that towns need not only "to work" but "to be works of art"—composed of familiar and ready-made motifs (as signs, pavements, street-fittings and outdoor bric-a-brac) as well as of architecture conceived as such. Much of the civic bric-a-brac, so important to integrity and character, is put on public land and subject to public control. The specialists in design wink at all this or are defeatist about it; the responsible officials seem to have no conception of its cumulative importance in the scene. The *Review* wants both designers and officials to take a good look at the total appearance of their towns. The objections raised by the editors are common to every industrial society'. . . .

'In summing up this preliminary inquiry, the *Review* recalls that by force of wealth and technic, Uncle Sam is in fact broadcasting his values throughout the western world. This technocratic nation holds itself out as the fortress of free will yet visual squalor apparently escapes or defies the American will, right at home. This society has not clearly asserted its *will-to-form*'. . . .



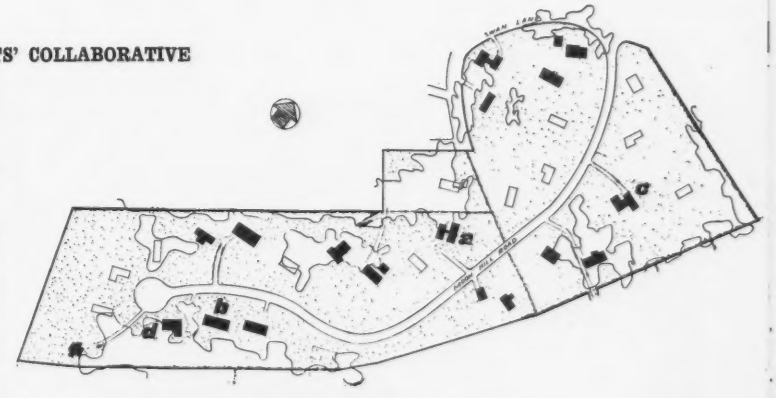
U.S. DOMESTIC

For reasons—economic, philosophic, sociologic—too complicated to enter into here, the private home is the most American building in America. Its creation would seem to draw to the top all the latent adventurousness and inventiveness of the pioneering American (except where these qualities are held in the thraldom of Colonial hypnosis—as heavy a halter on architecture there as Georgian is here). Within the modern idiom the architectural expression of the American private house takes innumerable different forms, providing architectural critics with a glorious, and sometimes bloody, battleground. Fundamentally they can be reduced to the two main streams defined last month by Robin Boyd (pp. 150-153). However, as he pointed out with reference to Australia, even these represent no conflicting theories of any real significance; the difference is one of mood rather than anything else, the mutual aim—'to achieve ultimate simplicity of means.' As one looks through the American houses on the pages that follow, the existence of this mutual aim seems to be particularly apparent, and Thoreau's dream of a house constantly suggests itself as the common ideal to which they all, in one way or another, adhere—'I sometimes dream of a larger and more populous house, standing in a golden age, of enduring materials, and without gingerbread work, which shall still consist of only one room . . . a cavernous house . . . where some may live in the fireplace, some in the recess of the window, and some on settles, some at one end of the hall, some at another, and some aloft on rafters with the spiders, if they choose.'

Elaborating the theme, Thoreau suggests that his ideal would contain 'all the essentials of a house, and nothing for house-keeping; where you can see all the treasures of the house at one view, and everything hangs upon its peg that a man should use; at once kitchen, pantry, parlor, chamber, storehouse, and garret; where you can see so necessary a thing as a barrel or a ladder, so convenient a thing as a cupboard, and hear the pot boil, and pay your respects to the fire that cooks your dinner, and the oven that bakes your bread, and the necessary furniture and utensils are the chief ornaments; where the washing is not put out, nor the fire, nor the mistress. . . . A house whose inside is as open and manifest as a bird's nest, and you cannot go in at the front door and out at the back without seeing some of its inhabitants; where to be a guest is to be presented with the freedom of the house, and not to be carefully excluded from seven eighths of it, shut up in a particular cell, and told to make yourself at home there—in solitary confinement.'

SIX MOON HILL ESTATE BOSTON MASS: ARCHITECTS' COLLABORATIVE

Six Moon Hill estate was founded and developed as a communal housing enterprise by the Architects' Collaborative, a group of young architects* who believe that 'A team can raise its integrated work to higher potentials than the sum of the work of just so many individuals.' The houses have been built for members of the group and for other young couples, mainly Harvard University professors. The site is two miles out of Lexington and fifteen driving minutes from Cambridge, Mass., on a rocky wooded hill with some fine views. The area is divided into 29 lots of half an acre with four acres left for recreation purposes to be developed jointly later. Though houses were handled individually, the general layout and certain standard details were done by the group, in addition unity is obtained by using identical features like natural siding and white trim, grey painted plywood panels and masonry, flat or shed roofs and so on. All major changes have to be submitted to a Planning Board consisting of architects and residents; members wishing to sell must give the corporation a first refusal or obtain their approval. Above is shown the general plan of the estate and on the next two pages houses a, b, c and d are illustrated, as well as a larger and more luxurious house also by TAC (short for the Collaborative) in Belmont, Mass.



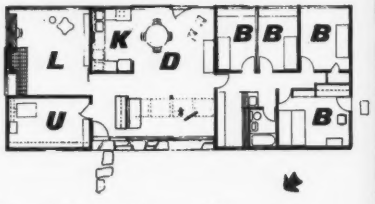
* TAC—The Architects' Collaborative: Jean Bodman Fletcher, Norman Fletcher, Walter Gropius, John C. Harkness, Sarah Harkness, Robert S. McMillen, Louis A. McMillen, Benjamin Thompson. Associates: Leonard Currie, William Halble.

1

HOUSE a SIX MOON HILL: ARCHITECTS' COLLABORATIVE

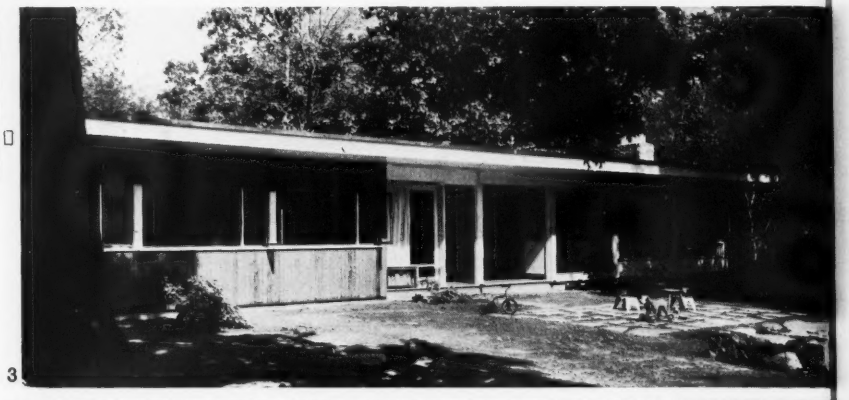
The house for L. A. McMillen is on a steep slope, and is planned in two wings with a basement for storage and play beneath the living wing. On the lower part of the slope, connected by a glass walled passage, is the bedroom wing. Timber frame construction with studs at four foot centres and internal wall facing of waterproof plywood; other walls are concrete cinder blocks with granulated cork insulation; roof, tar and gravel with saucer-shaped plexiglass skylights; walls faced internally with natural wood and painted plywood panels; ceiling, painted boards; floors, concrete in workshop, flagstone in living area; radiant heating panels in floors. 1, from the south.

HOUSE b SIX MOON HILL: ARCHITECTS' COLLABORATIVE



In this house for John and Sarah Harkness a kitchen-dining-play space forms a central rectangle with a parents' living and a utility room on one side and the bedrooms on the other; the children's dressing room can be converted into a bathroom later; the play space which occupies the north end of the central rectangle can be curtained off to provide an extra bedroom; the windows can be raised and the wall opposite opened completely so that a 'breezeway' through the house is created, see 2, below. The structure is a wood frame on concrete block foundations; exterior walls redwood siding; interior, plywood; floors, greaseproof/asphalt tiles in kitchen-dining-playroom area; ceilings, acoustic tiles; roof, tar and gravel with plexiglass skylights; heating, radiant floor panels. 3, the house from the south. 4, the kitchen.

3



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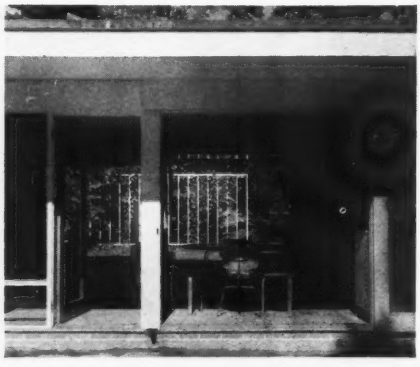
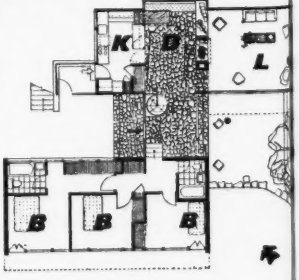


all plans drawn to 1/32 in. = 1 ft.

5

6

HOUSE c SIX MOON HILL: ARCHITECTS' COLLABORATIVE



Placed on a steep slope the bedroom area is higher than the living-cum-dining-room wing below which is a garage (convertible into bedroom and bath) and utility-cum-play space; a spiral staircase leads down from the hall. Structure, mainly wood frame. Hall and dining room floors are of slate. A two-way brick chimney divides living and dining areas, which have walls faced with natural plywood. 5, from the south. 6, looking over the spiral staircase to the dining area.

7

HOUSE d SIX MOON HILL:
ARCHITECTS' COLLABORATIVE

8

The house for Jean and Norman Fletcher is of three floors in two wings on a level site. One wing comprises a semi-basement in which are the heaters, storage space and a recreation room-cum-study, the bedrooms are above; in the other, on an intermediate level, is a high living-dining room and the kitchen. The entrance hall and stairs form a connecting link between the two wings. The structure is wood frame on concrete block foundations; the roof is surfaced with tar and gravel; walls, externally, redwood siding with natural stain; floors, concrete in recreation room, cork tile in living room, oak in bedroom. 7, living room from the staircase-hall. 8, house from the south-east.

9

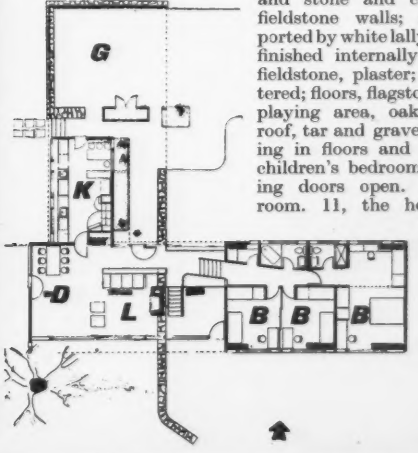
10

11

12

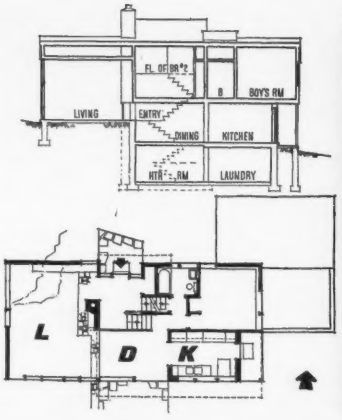
HOUSE AT BELMONT MASS:
ARCHITECTS' COLLABORATIVE

Built on slightly uneven ground. One facade faces a street of conventional houses. The dining-living room, entrance hall and kitchen are at ground level; the adjoining wing comprises a bedroom floor half a flight up with a utility room, playroom and another bedroom below it. An open staircase-well connects the three levels physically and spatially. The structure is wood frame with cypress siding and stone and cinder-block on fieldstone walls; overhang supported by white lally columns; walls finished internally with cypress, fieldstone, plaster; ceilings, plastered; floors, flagstone in living and playing area, oak in bedrooms; roof, tar and gravel; radiant heating in floors and ceilings. 9, the children's bedrooms showing sliding doors open. 10, the living room. 11, the house from the north. 12, the house from the south-east.



HOUSE AT BELMONT MASS: ARCHITECT CARL KOCH

A small corner site on steep rocky slopes suggested this five-level plan; a garage with utility room, laundry and heating in semi-basement; dining and kitchen above, half a flight to entrance hall and living room, and another half flight up to the bedrooms. At the top of the house is a studio-bedroom. Structure, timber frame faced externally with fir siding which also forms one side of living room; other walls rough plaster; sliding panel opens from studio-bedroom to adjoining bedroom; floors in hall and dining room flagstone; in living room waxed concrete and in bedrooms varnished oak. 13, from north-east. 14, from south-west.



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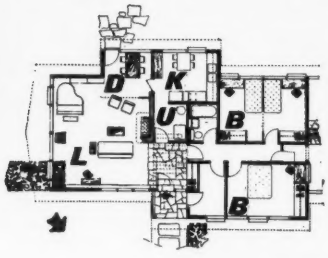
15, 16

On a flat, wooded site; the chief requirement was a living room spacious enough to accommodate a large number of people as well as a grand piano and to allow for later extensions. Structure, wood frame with rock lath walls and metal lath ceilings; roof, asphalt shingles; exterior walls redwood with linseed oil finish; floors, granolithic finish, flagstones in entrance hall; fireplace water-struck red brick and plaster hood. 15, house looking north. 16, interior of the living room.

HOUSE AT CONCORD MASS: ARCHITECT H. STUBBINS JNR.



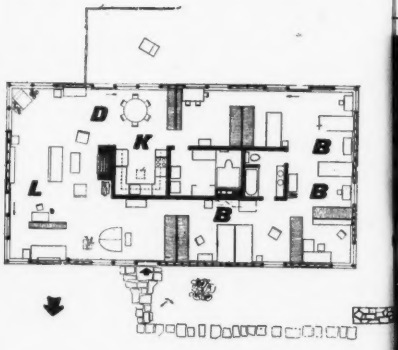
17, 18

19, 20

21, 22

HOUSE AT WOODBRIDGE CONN: ARCHITECT V. SKULLY JNR.

Sited on a gentle slope, the house is planned as one large room with the services forming a walled-in core at the centre. Partitioning is obtained by movable cupboards. The structure consists of 4 inch by 4 inch posts on slab concrete foundations with infilling of 2 inch by 4 inch studs for nailing the diagonal pine siding; walls round central utility core, cinder blocks; roofing, plank and beam, 5-ply built up with tar and gravel; flashing and gravel stop, copper; storage units, cabinets and doors, fir and birch plywood, varnished natural clear; natural dark grey concrete floor slab filled and waxed; radiant heating with copper tubing; photographers' lamps with hand-clamps provide a flexible lighting system. 17, south facade. 18, north facade. 19, living room looking west and 20 looking north. 21, south-west bedroom. 22, main north bedroom.



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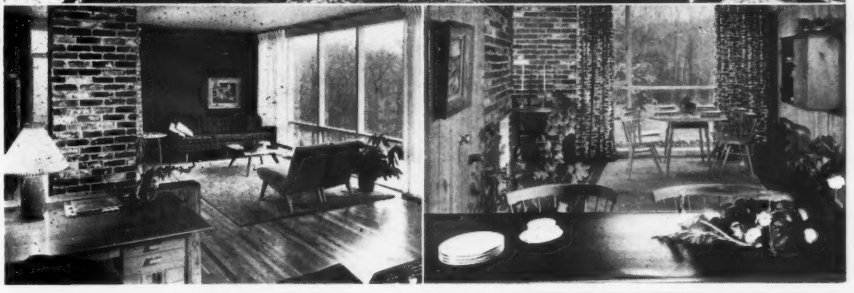

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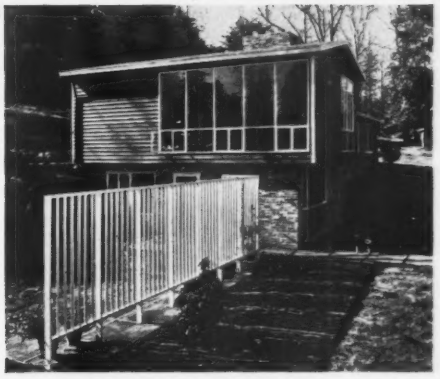
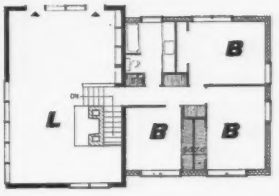
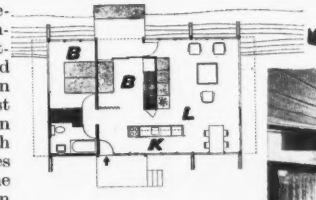


HOUSE AT MOUNT VERNON VIRGINIA:
ARCHITECT C. GOODMAN

This house is one of a number forming a small housing estate on the side of a hill in a wooded park. The trees have all been preserved and the most is made of the views. The plan of the house illustrated is on three levels. The walls up to first floor level are of brick and cinder blocks on cinder concrete block foundations; above they are of stud and redwood siding with glass blanket insulation, four-ply and felt roofing; floors are of concrete slabs over asphalt saturated felt; doors and windows are pine; walls internally are white pine and plaster; doors, birch; windows, steel sash and fixed glass; forced air heating system. 23, 24, first floor living room. 25, lower floor dining room. 26, exterior showing the main living room window.

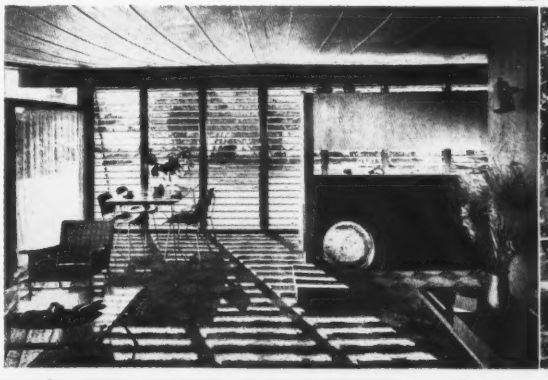


HOUSE AT SARASOTA FLA:
ARCHITECTS TWITCHELL AND RUDOLPH



A small single-storey house; construction consisting of a post and lintel system on the east and west sides, filled in mainly with wooden louvres and glass; the distance between is spanned by ½ inch by ⅛ inch cold rolled steel flat bars in their catenary form set on 12 inch centres; fibre board and 2 inches of insulation is clipped above bars and sprayed with a flexible 'cocoon' consisting of layers of saran and vinyl plastics;* a light steel truss is set in the plane of the roof on the north and south sides for stiffening and to enable north and south end walls to be fully glazed. 27, living room looking north-east. 28, house from north-east.

27



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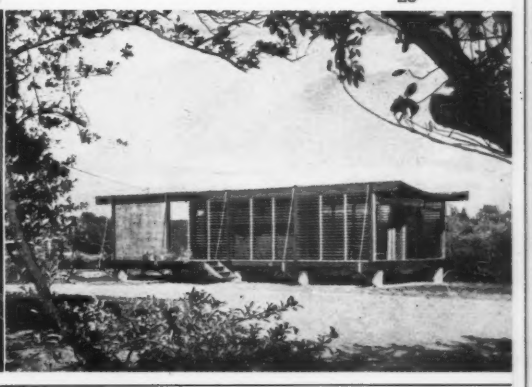


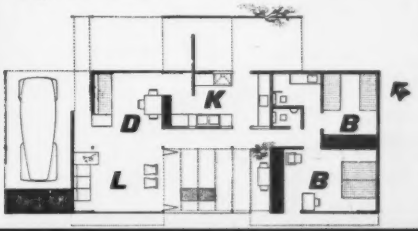
* Originally developed for protecting guns, aeroplanes and so on from rust when not in use; also used in England for lampshades (see AR May, 1951).

29

30

HOUSE AT SARASOTA FLA:
ARCHITECTS TWITCHELL AND RUDOLPH

Planned around a service core with a screened patio between living and sleeping areas. The structure is planned on a bay system: light wooden trusses at 2 foot centres span from 16 to 21 feet and rest on beams supported by cypress columns at 10 foot intervals; roof, timber and wood slabs covered with plaster; bamboo wall on the east, 29, forms a service yard. 30 shows the garden facade.



31

HOUSE AT VENICE FLORIDA: ARCHITECTS TWITCHELL AND RUDOLPH

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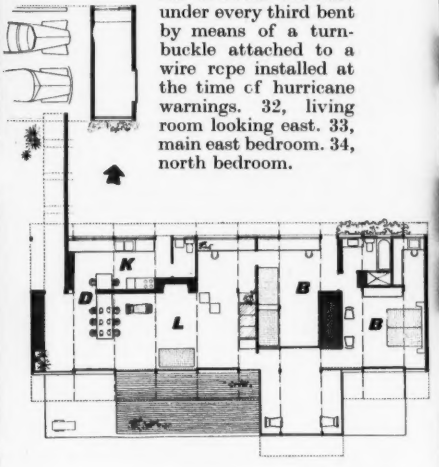
33

34

Planned to give all major rooms a south aspect; all storage space is built in; reflecting pool abutting the glass facade, 31, is for cooling as well as decorative purposes. Foundations of reinforced concrete slab resting on concrete beams and piles; walls of lime block, partly load bearing on north side, laid with vertical joints aligned, and reinforced with rods laid horizontally in every third course; to prevent moisture penetration walls are ventilated by keeping the centre web section of the block free from mortar and by venting the walls top and bottom. Roof of 'mill' construction with exposed members of cypress; interior walls faced with striated and plain plywood; floors terrazzo throughout; electric wall heaters in every room; hurricane protection by wood shutters for all large glass areas; the overhang on the south side is tied to deadmen under every third bent by means of a turnbuckle attached to a wire rope installed at the time of hurricane warnings. 32, living room looking east. 33, main east bedroom. 34, north bedroom.



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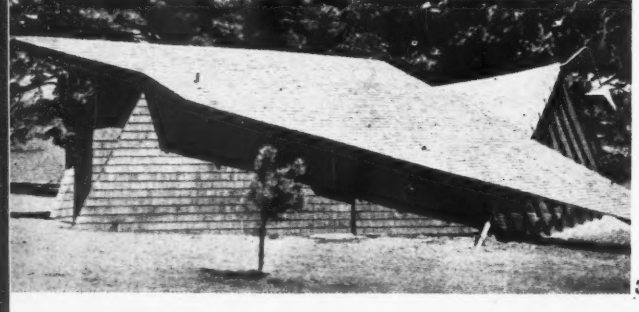

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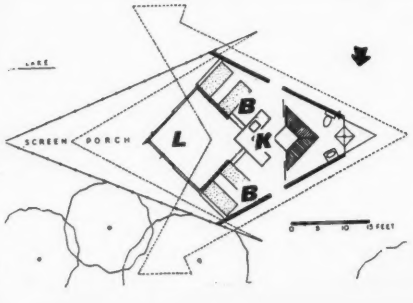
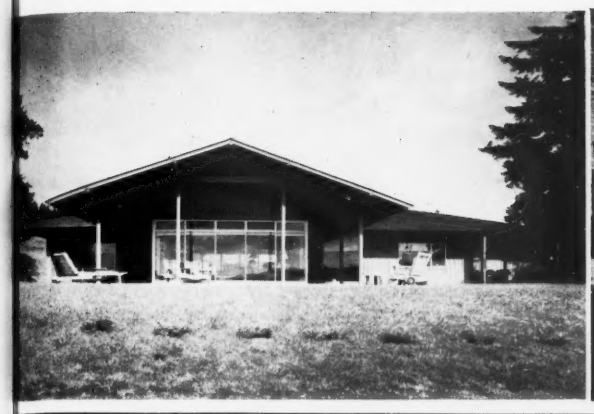


HOUSE AT JACKSON MISSOURI: ARCHITECT R. K. OVERSTREET

On a slightly rising site, facing an artificial lake, of which full view was to be provided from as many places in the living area as possible. There is a large screened porch to the east, 35, and behind it a diamond-shaped living room, with sliding doors between. Other divisions are effected by slight changes of floor level; the structure is of timber with shingle walls and roof externally; a large floodlight outside the porch provides illumination and keeps moths away from the interior. 36, the house from the north.

HOUSE AT YAMHILL OREGON: ARCHITECT PIETRO BELLUSCHI

Built round a courtyard, with a separate guest house; structure, wood frame, faced outside with rough sawn boards and battens; inside walls birch veneer plywood, fir plywood, t. and g. hemlock; concrete floors; asphalt tiles; roof, cedar shingles. 37, living room exterior. 38, its hearth.



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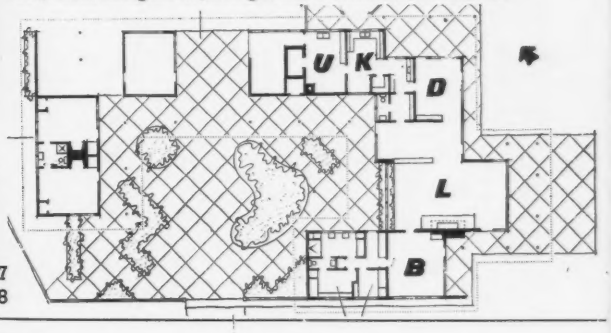

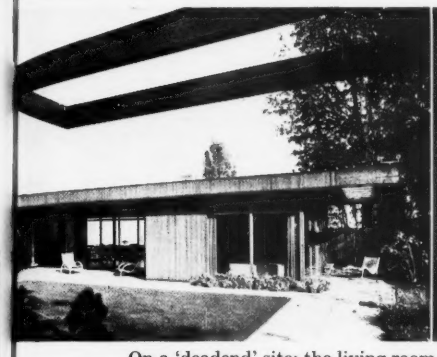

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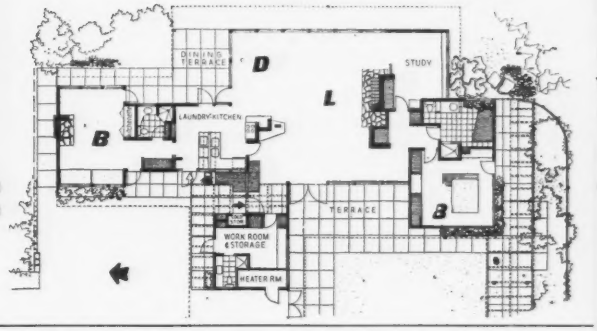
On a 'deadend' site; the living room and the bedroom has each its own patio; outside walls are 2 inch by 6 inch solid planking with 2 inch by 4 inch strips nailed to it at 3 foot centres, covered with building paper and 1 inch by 3 inch t. and g. vertical cedar boards; the siding is bleached and lightly oiled; woven wood texture on garage walls and bedroom ceiling. 39, west terrace. 40, living room looking south-east.

HOUSE AT PORTLAND OREGON: ARCHITECT PIETRO BELLUSCHI



HOUSE AT PORTLAND OREGON: ARCHITECT JOHN YEON

On a fairly even site built round a garden court where surrounding loggias form the principal means of communication between the different parts of the house; all the rooms face away from it to benefit from the views. Structure, concrete foundations and some masonry; otherwise wood (mainly Douglas fir); silver weathered grey exterior walls, natural shingled roofs; garden court paved and planted. 41, exterior of living room. 42, garden court and pool. 43, main entrance with garage on the right.

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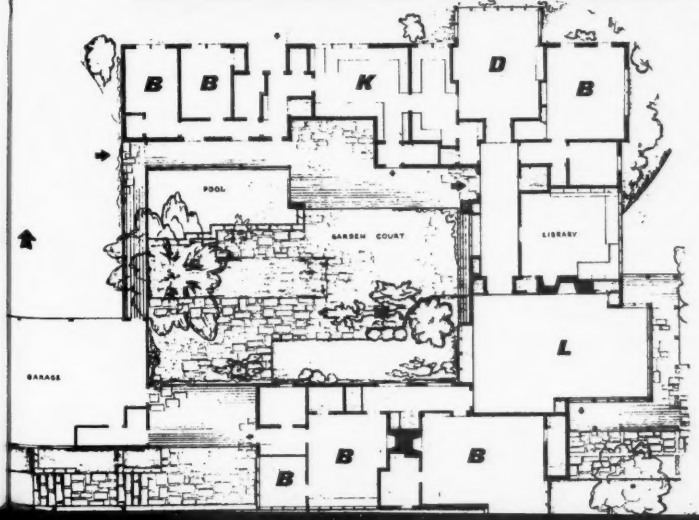

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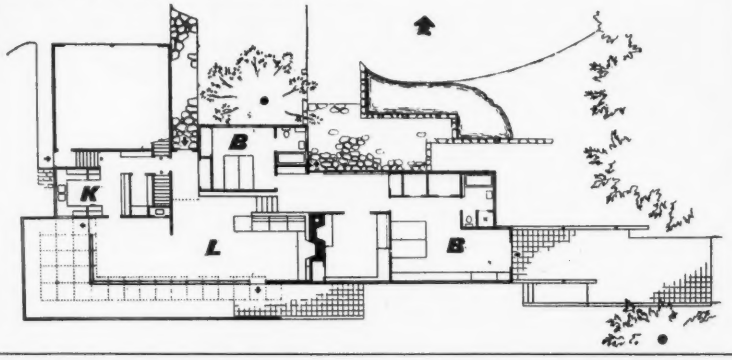
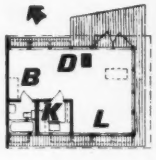
HOUSE IN NORTH CALIFORNIA: ARCHITECT J. YEON

Built on a site of which half slopes steeply down; the garage is placed on a lower level; the living room however with its surrounding balcony is built on struts to conform to the level of the rest of the house, 44. Structure entirely of wood on a foundation of concrete, some masonry used as well; roofs natural shingles; exterior walls weathered Douglas fir; gardens planted with shrubs, wild trees and flowers indigenous to the region. 45, house from north-east.



HOUSE AT SAVSALITO CALIF: ARCHITECTS CAMPBELL AND WONG

Sited on a steepish slope, the house consists virtually of one room with a service core in one corner and a balcony on three sides; structure, timber frame, faced externally with diagonal sheathing where not glazed; internal partitions, pine tongue and groove boarding and plywood; composition roof. 46, living room looking south. 47, house from the west.



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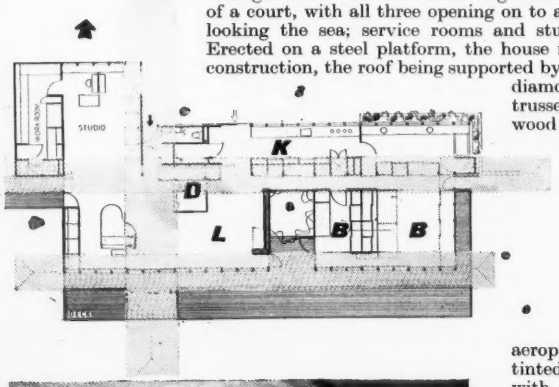
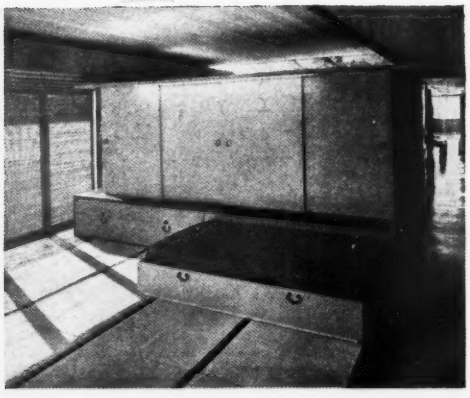
HOUSE IN MARIN COUNTY CALIF: ARCHITECT J. HILLMER

Placed on a rocky wooded hillside on the beach of Belvedere Island near San Francisco and planned so that existing trees could be left standing and only a minimum of the rocky ground had to be broken: bedrooms are arranged on one side and the living room on the other side of a court, with all three opening on to a wide deck overlooking the sea; service rooms and studio at the rear. Erected on a steel platform, the house is of wood frame construction, the roof being supported by two long parallel diamond-shaped roof trusses, built on a plywood web, like an aeroplane spar (shown tinted on the plan), with a third spanning across them. Walls are rough sawn redwood planking; the roof is surfaced with pebbles from the beach. The fireplace is a single slab of black horneblend diorite rock; large storage units hold beds and all household implements; fittings as far as possible are made flush with the walls. 48, house from south-east. 49 shows one of the sliding beds drawn out.





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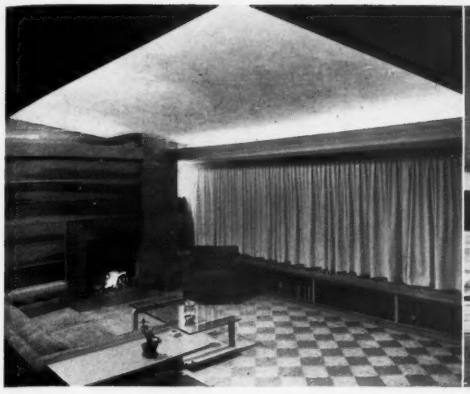

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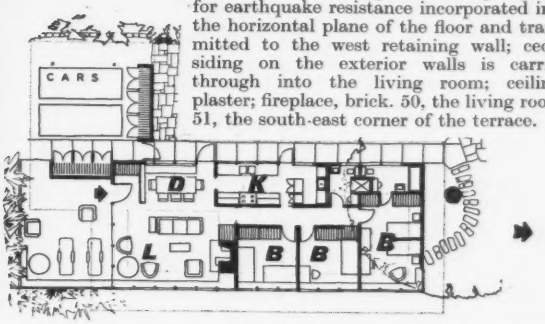
HOUSE AT LAFAYETTE CALIF: ARCHITECT F. LANGHORST

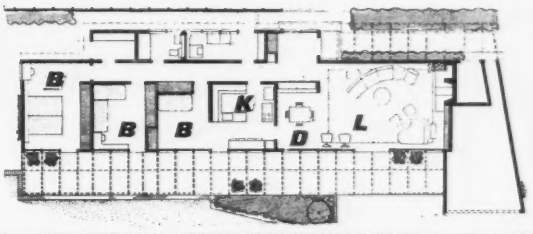
Sited on a steep slope, the house is supported on struts; diagonal bracing required for earthquake resistance incorporated into the horizontal plane of the floor and transmitted to the west retaining wall; cedar siding on the exterior walls is carried through into the living room; ceilings plaster; fireplace, brick. 50, the living room. 51, the south-east corner of the terrace.



52 53

HOUSE AT SAN CARLOS CALIF: ARCHITECT F. LANGHORST

On a narrow site in a street; all major rooms facing south with direct access to garden; folding partition between kitchen and child's bedroom; structure, wood frame faced externally with vertical t. and g. redwood, internally with sheet rock and t. and g. redwood, 53; a mineral surface roofing; hardwood and linoleum floors; indirect lighting. 52, the terrace along the south-east facade.



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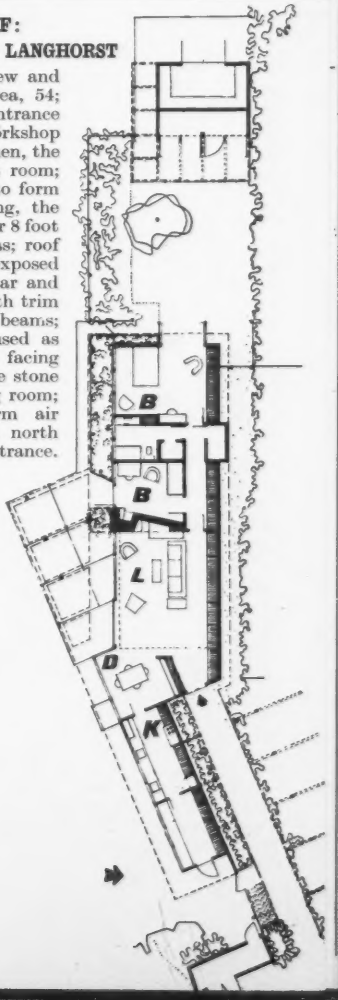
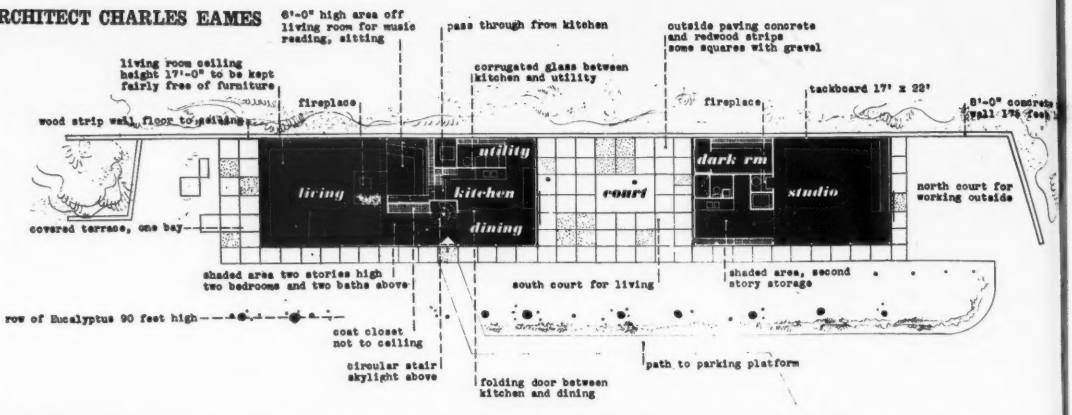
HOUSE IN MARIN COUNTY CALIF: ARCHITECT F. LANGHORST

All rooms face south over the view and have their own outdoor living area, 54; what would normally be a service entrance is enlarged to make a hobby workshop with a door connecting to the kitchen, the study being also used as a guest room; concrete slab foundations extend to form terrace; north wall is load bearing, the southern wall is of posts at 4 foot or 8 foot centres to allow large glazed areas; roof constructed of 3 inch by 8 inch exposed rafters at 2 foot centres, on top tar and gravel, below ½ inch sheet rock with trim adding apparent width to the beams; sheet rock and redwood siding used as interior wall facings; exterior facing brought into the living room; large stone chimney between study and living room; indirect lighting; gas fired warm air heating system. 55, pathway on north side of house leading to the main entrance.



HOUSE AT SANTA MONICA CALIFORNIA: ARCHITECT CHARLES EAMES

This house is No. 8 of the Case Study House Scheme promoted by John Entenza, editor of the magazine *Arts and Architecture*; it was designed by Charles Eames for his own occupation; planned as two separate units, one containing two storey living room; bedroom floor partly projecting into living room with utility-kitchen-dining-room below its rear section, the other connected with it by patio, being the workshop with two storey studio, darkroom and storage above. Prefabricated steel structure, steel sash and door frames, roofing and exterior walls steel decking with plastic panels, also plywood, asbestos, wire glass panels; living room walls canvas and some wood siding, bedroom sliding panels translucent glass and synthetic sheet materials, floors rubber. 56, north wall of studio. 57, exterior. 58, entrance. 59, living room.



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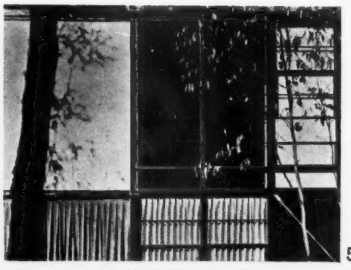

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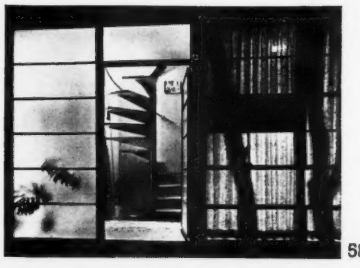


58

59

HOUSE AT SANTA MONICA: ARCHITECTS EAMES AND SAARINEN

Built for the occupation of John Entenza, sponsor of the Case Study Scheme, the house has a view through existing trees to the Pacific Ocean. At the centre is a square study, wholly enclosed (no windows, no skylight). The living room opens on to a terrace which by its identical floor treatment and roof overhang is visually included into the room, 60; constructed as a concrete and steel shell fitting over the partitions; living room floor partly carpeted, kitchen floor rubber tile, dining area mastic surfacing; sliding door between higher level bedroom and living area; some walls corrugated glass, steel cupboards with sliding doors; panelling ferroboard painted grey; ceiling heating vents. 61 (facing page), porch over service entrance. 62, living room looking towards main entrance. 63, the hall and main entrance. 64, living room looking towards kitchen. 65, looking across living room to terrace; the bedroom floor is on a level with top of living room couch (see plan).

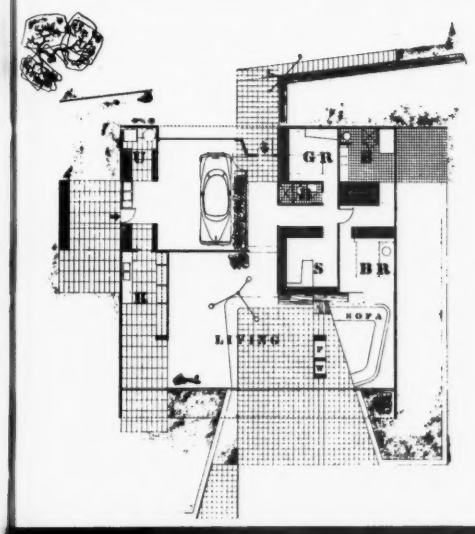
60

61

62

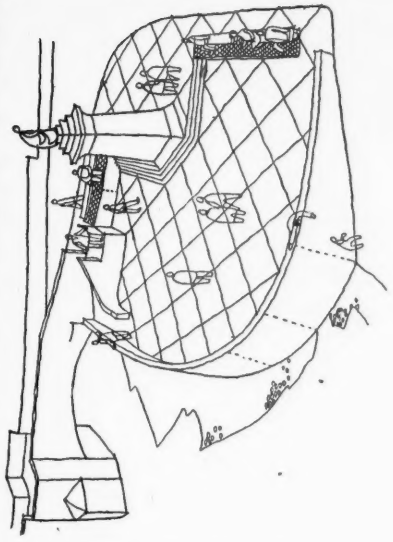
63

house at Santa Monica



64

65



On the opposite page a typical piece of no-man's land of the sort to be found in every town. The pavement sweeps down from the bridge and is linked back to it by a river wall of similar character, but the space within these limits has become another victim of the 'thoughtless' approach to urban amenity. Imprisoned inside a cage it is divorced from the pavement to which it belongs and disfigured by the worst sort of municipal 'primping'. The sketch on the right shows how it might be retrieved. The boundary with the street is swept away; a ramp links bridge and river walls; seats are placed at the higher level to get the view and the preserve of the seated is distinguished by a change of floor texture; the monument no longer looks like an afterthought. A redundant plot has become a useful part of the town, a pedestrian promontory at once a sanctuary from—and an addition to—the street. On the following pages the principles of dealing with such 'pocket handkerchief' spaces are discussed and other examples illustrated.

SPACE LEFT OVER

MAKING THE BEST OF THE ODD CORNER

1951 has provided evidence of a vast amount of willingness and energy ready, though unharnessed, for the task of tidying up and enlivening the odd spots in towns—the community's back-yards. It's staggering to see the amount of space taken up in existing towns by pieces of ground that were left over because a road was widened, a new building line established, a memorial statue or drinking fountain decided on—for a hundred causes, intentional or accidental. Often these 'pocket handkerchief' open spaces are in key positions, near town centres or main approaches, in the shadow of an important public building, just off a main street. They vary in size from space just big enough for a bench and a tree, a statue or a fountain, to an area in which several dozen people can sit or stroll, harangue or be harangued, sell or buy from stalls, or eat a picnic lunch. They pose a problem of some magnitude to local councils or committees of citizens concerned with their appearance. The present tendency, indeed it might almost be called a movement if it showed any signs of having a direction, is to hand them over to that school of British gardening (by—and with apologies to—Gertrude Jekyll, out of the Chelsea Flower show) that favours raised flower beds, dry walls, crazy paving and plenty of wrought iron; of which nothing in the circumstances could be more illogical or visually disastrous.

It is a problem on which few town planning text-books will help. Not that they help much on the visual side of things anyway. However, suppose they did, and what would the worried councillor or town designer look for in advice on what to do with the 'pocket handkerchief' open space. First of all he would want some sort of a definition as to what constitutes this kind of open space.

A 'pocket handkerchief' space may be square or rectangular (though

because of the accidental causes that gave birth to it, it is often triangular or polygonal). It usually has a building, a river or a canal close up on at least one side; if surrounded by roads it would be a roundabout, and though you may sit or stroll on roundabouts if the authorities permit you to do so, you risk life or limb in getting to them, and pocket handkerchiefs are or should be easily accessible; if it were hemmed in by buildings it would be a square, and it is not a square since squares are not odd pieces of land left over from more purposive activities; they are carefully contrived, or at least were so once, even if their present appearance belies the fact. The chief characteristic to remember is that these left-over spaces are, or once were, part of something else even though, through mismanagement or neglect, they have become visually divorced from their parents.

On the basis of these properties what are the main considerations to bear in mind in 'pocket handkerchief' design? First of all its size; clearly a space a few yards across doesn't allow much scope for complexity; simplicity is its first demand. For the same reason if it is to be any use as an open space its surface should be largely unobstructed. The clue to its design, as so often turns out to be the case, must be suggested by the circumstances in which it is found. The first thing of all to discover is where the space belongs or has once belonged. As we have shown, it is too small to stand on its own—it should and usually has been anchored to something—either a building or range of buildings, a highway or a piece of water. Having discovered what this is there are a number of different ways of reforging the link—by similarity of floor surface or of planes, by the placing of seats or of sculpture or by the provision of water. Paving of some kind or other will nearly always prove more appropriate than grass, again merely because of restricted space. Though varied floor textures have their contribution to make they should for the same reason be used sparingly, preferably with a definite function in mind such as to define boundaries or discourage entry to undesirables in the form of cars, bicycles, etc.* Complicated changes of level, unless strictly dictated by function or site conditions, should be avoided; they are bound to look confused and may so break up the space that it will become useless and suffer the worst fate that can befall a 'pocket handkerchief' space, to get itself railed in as an ornament.

The following pages provide a few do and don'ts on the matter.

* Where more emphatic hazards are needed, changes of surface can be enforced by other devices like bollards, recessed channels and so on.

1

THE SITE Here is an odd lot alongside a pedestrian way, a site such as any community might find on its hands. It will stand excellently for the sort of open space we are dealing with here—one that is neither a square, a roundabout nor a small public park. On the following pages the REVIEW shows what it considers to be the right and the wrong approach to the use and design of such spaces. The story is told, in pictures and captions, by Donald Dewar Mills. In the left-hand columns are examples which succeed, either by accident or intention (usually the former). The right-hand column points a cautionary finger to those instances where reason, convenience and propriety have been ignored.

2

3

4

don't button it up

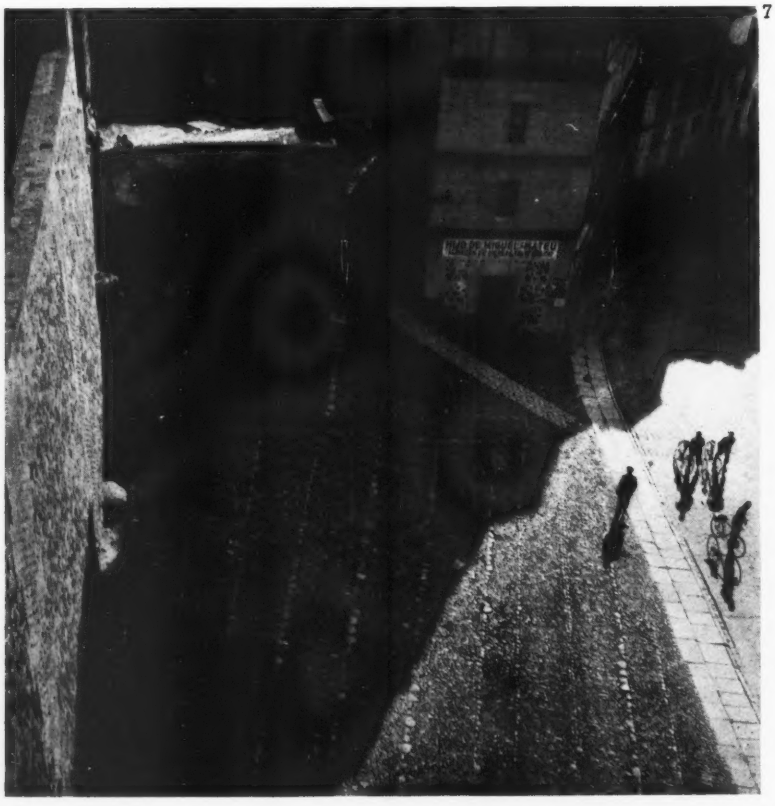
2, an odd corner remains free for lounging and listening; an uninterrupted extension of the pavement. 3, *buttoned up behind an iron curtain and surrounded by roads, it is both useless and ludicrous, and quite unworthy of a walk to* 18, *St. James Street for the keys,* 4.

5

don't fill it in

6

5, the plinth seat provides a simple breathing space close by the road.
6, no such sanctuary here from the narrow, busy pavement. The 'rockery-nook' man got there first and filled the place to overflowing.

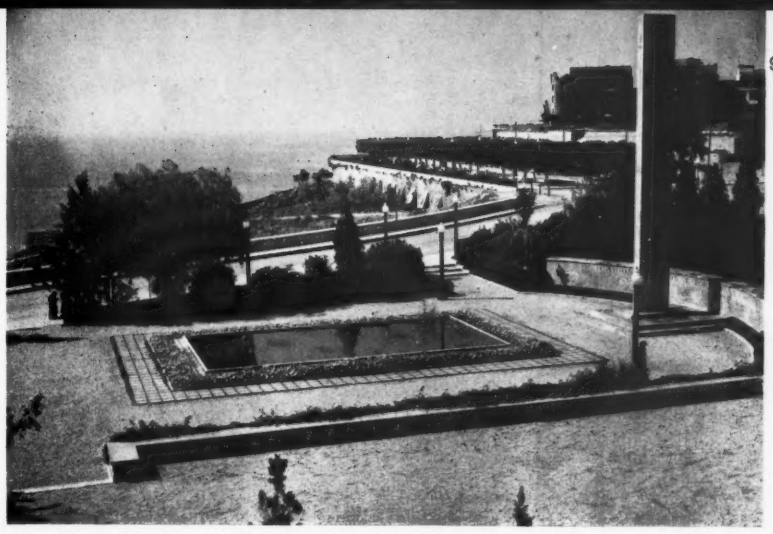


7

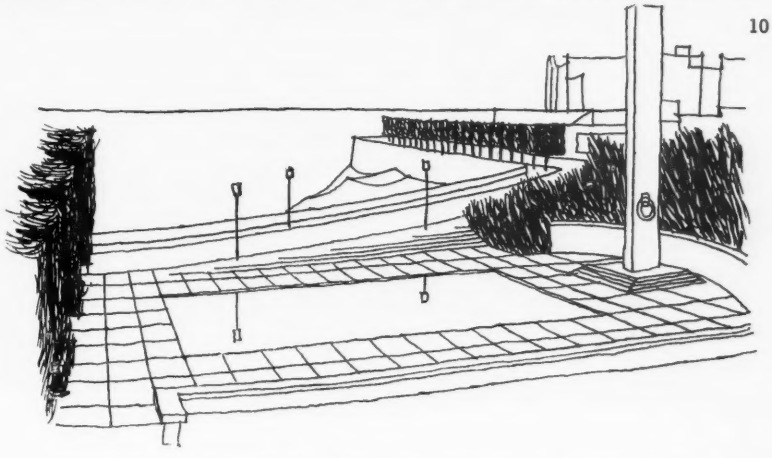
don't divide it off

8

7, still part of the street, interesting changes of pattern and texture demarcate the surface functions. 8, the broken link—an absence of visual affinity is intensified by the physical barrier.



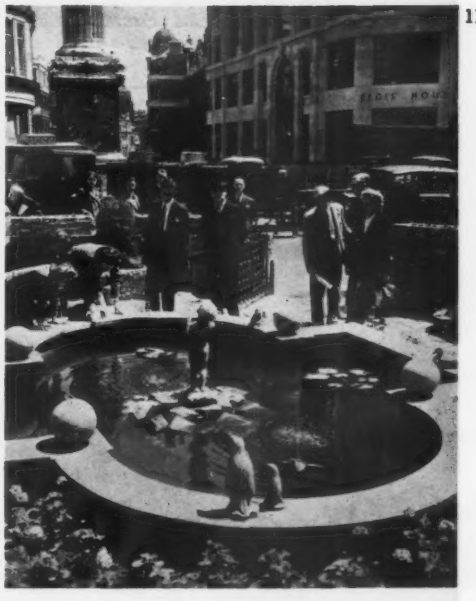
9



10

don't fuss over formality

9, a perfectly legitimate attempt at formality, spoilt by haphazard planting which has succeeded in divorcing the space from its natural parent, the promenade. In addition, the unnecessarily fussy framing round the pool has cancelled out the essential simplicity of the water-mirror idea. 10, *the same place less the obstruction and the fuss. Pleached trees form the left-hand boundary and echo those on the distant promenade.* 11, *the depths plumbed, as a result of a desire for formal quaintness coupled with a profound ignorance of the virtues of simplicity.*



11

12

don't be bleak and barren

12 gets away with an air of bleakness imparted by the floor surface, because the surface acts as a foil to buildings and drinking fountain. But when bleakness is coupled with complete disorganization of surface, planting and surrounding buildings as in 13, *the net result is a barren nightmare.*

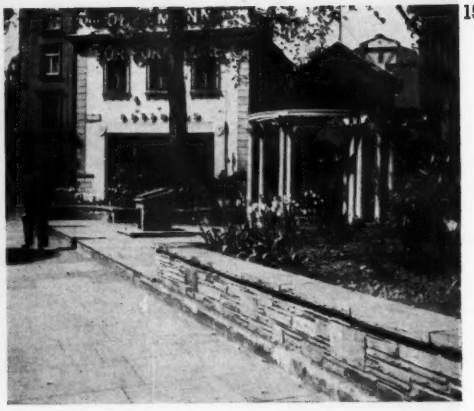
13

14

don't obscure tree trunks

14, *trees rising straight from the floor surface, defining and containing the space should be treated as decorative objects in their own right.* 15, *the addition of 'Flower Show' bric-a-brac is as fatal to the effect as cutting them down.*

15



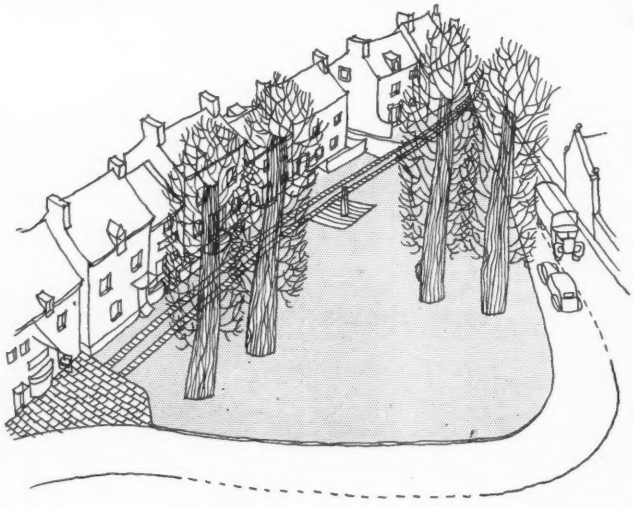
16

don't be arty with entrances

16, *the view through the archway entices, the bollards stipulate 'Pedestrians Only.'* 17, *the prim gateway resists with a flutter of coy wrought iron.*

17

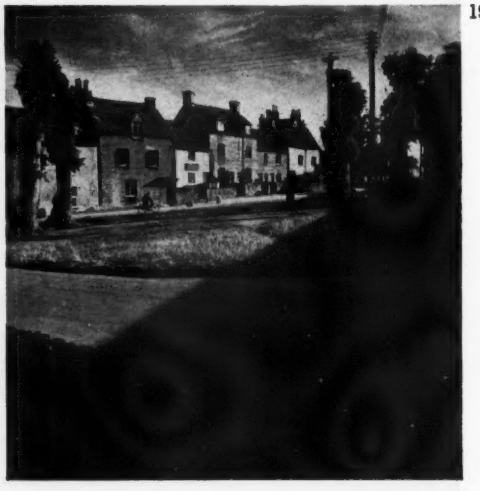
18



don't turn it into a roundabout

19, *a space cut off from the parent buildings, now a mere roundabout.* 18, *the link is reforged, a change of surface and the paved service track clearly indicates a 'No through road.'*

19



20

don't use it as a dumping ground

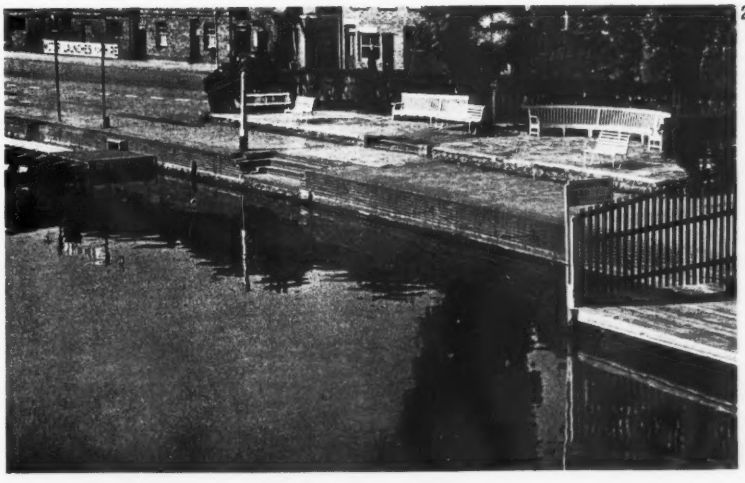
20, *the right way to treat a 'breathing' space in a country town.* 21, *the way too many local authorities treat it—as a ready-made dumping ground for municipal paraphernalia.*

21

22

23, *another dumping ground. By clearing away extraneous objects and defining the area by surface changes.* 22, *the space regains unity with the street without losing its identity.*

23



24

don't misplace the boundary

24, *messy though it is in detail this lookout has the virtues of being accessible to pedestrians while discouraging vehicles, and it is well-linked to the river via the towpath. Contrast it with* 25, *a spot a few hundred yards upstream. Where the hedge in* 24 *correctly defined the boundary between pedestrian and vehicle and the association of the space with the river, here hedge and railing freeze out both and turn the space into a vacant lot.*

25

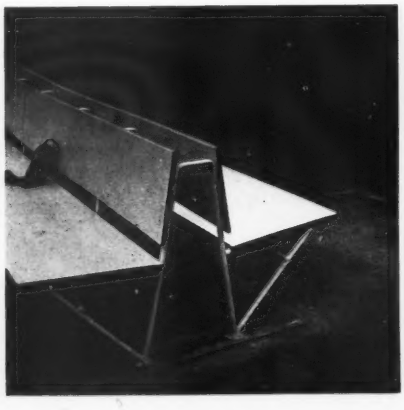
26

avoid the gardenesque

Gaiety and elegance are not out of place if they are handled properly as they are in 26, *but let whimsy enter the 'pocket handkerchief' space and* 27 *is what you'll get.*

27

28

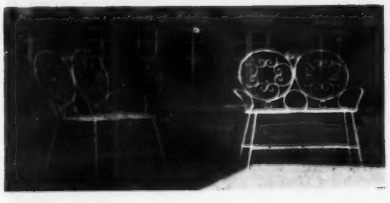


avoid the rustic and the pretentious

28, simplicity of bench and chair is essential in small spaces. The attempt to attract attention by sentimental rusticity, 29, *or overdressed coquetry* 30, *merely looks silly.*

29

30



31

32

33

avoid quaint and curious surfaces

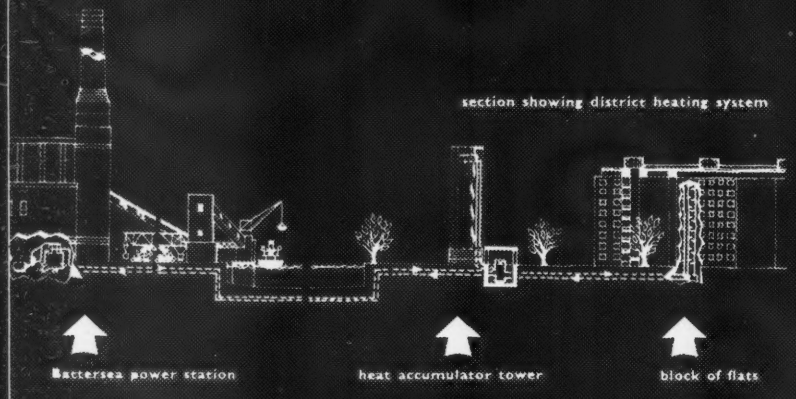
All kinds of effects are possible in small spaces through well-thought-out floor surfaces—complexity as in 31, *the tracer line used decoratively as in* 32, *geometry for its own sake as in* 33. *The most common effect and the one that never succeeds is that of the fussy, suburban back-yard* 34-36.

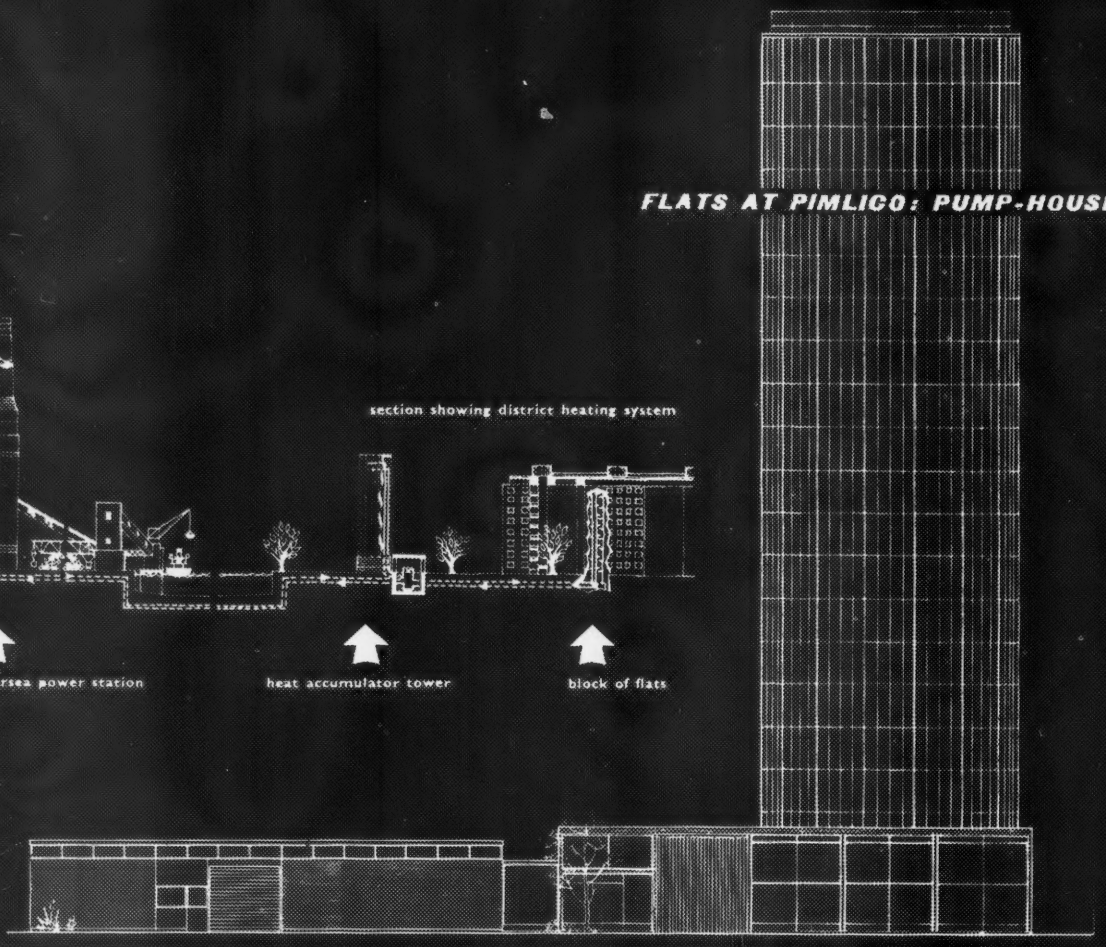
34

35

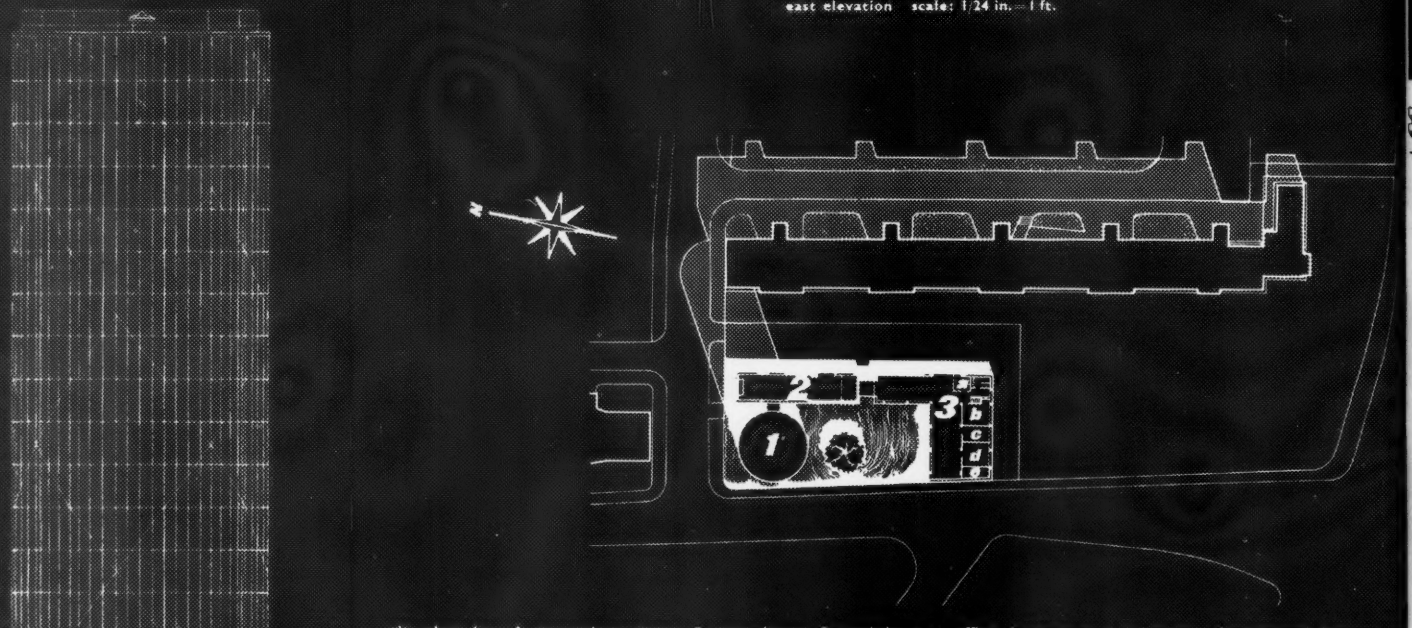
36

FLATS AT PIMLICO: PUMP-HOUSE AND WORKSHOPS

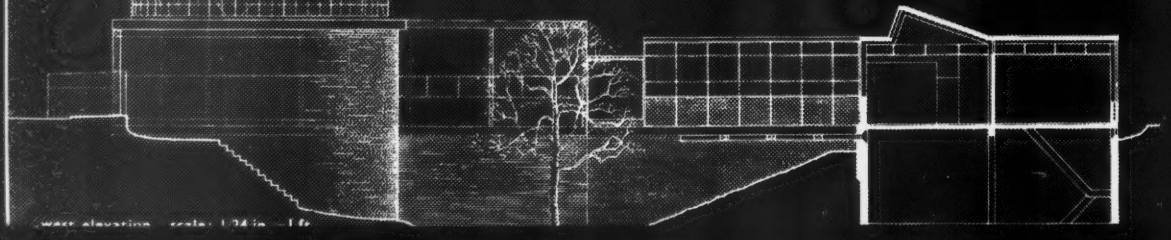




east elevation scale: 1/24 in. = 1 ft.



site plan: key: 1, accumulator tower. 2, pump-house. 3, workshops. a, office. b, canteen. c, paintshop. d, plumbers' shop. e, sto



west elevation scale: 1/24 in. = 1 ft.

1

FLATS AT PIMLICO LONDON

pump-house and workshops

POWELL and MOYA: ARCHITECTS

the pump-house is sited at the base of the 136-foot high accumulator tower near the sunken garden which has been laid out on the north side of the disused dock in which the base of the tower sits. The main problem was to design a small building adjacent to the tall accumulator tower and yet avoid its being dwarfed by the tower. The pump-house building was therefore made as simple, and the proportions as generous, as possible. The part immediately opposite the accumulator tower is attached to it by a small glazed link and both sides of the pump-house are glass so that the most powerful element in the design, the accumulator's circular base with its facing of granite setts, is seen through the pump-house building.

On the ground floor are housed the pumps circulating the main water to Battersea Power Station as well as the hot water from the accumulator to the flats. In addition there is a control panel, an office for the pump-house operator, an entrance lobby and unloading bay. In the basement is the main piping and valve gear for the pumps on the ground floor.

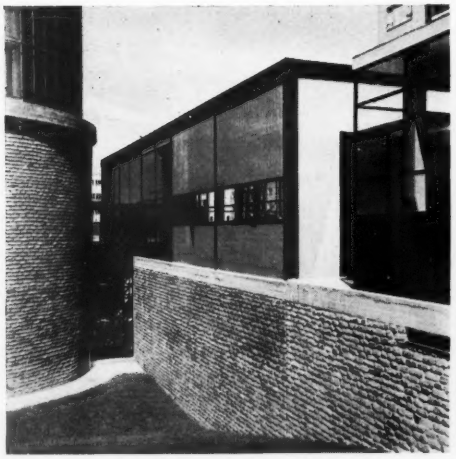
The structure is of 8 in. by 6 in. r.s. stanchions and the ground floor is of reinforced concrete. The walls, where solid, consist of reinforced concrete panels, tiled extern-

2

1, the pump-house and workshop are grouped round a sunken garden at the foot of the hot-water accumulator tower, and are seen here from one of the nine-storey blocks of flats (described and illustrated, A.R., February, 1951, pages 70 to 79). 2, a corner of the pump-house showing one of the exposed 8 in. by 6 in. r.s. stanchions and the grey, glazed-tile facing to the wall panel.

3

4



5

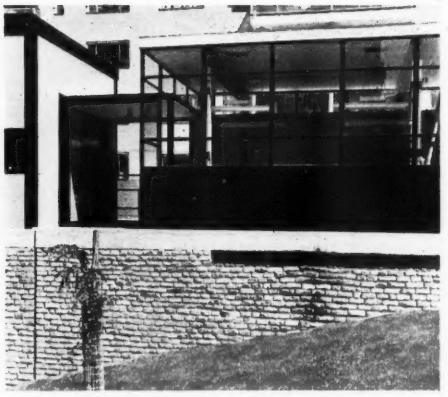
3, the east wall of the pump-house composed of ¼ inch polished plate glass in universal section steel frames. 4, the base of the accumulator tower, the pump-house and, to the right, one corner of the workshops. The plinth walls are faced with setts from roads which originally crossed the site. 5, piping on the lower floor of the pump-house; flow and return pipes are painted bright red and blue respectively.

ally and with wood wool permanent shuttering internally. The hollow-tile roof has wood wool permanent shuttering, screed and roofing felt. Glazed walls are of ¼-inch polished plate glass in universal section steel frames. Internally the walls are hard plaster, painted; the ceiling, ½-inch asbestos spray, and the floor surface is of quarry tiles. The basement has reinforced concrete walls faced externally with granite setts (which, as with those of the accumulator tower, were salvaged from paved streets that formerly crossed the site).

The steel frame, glazing bars and metal generally are painted black internally and externally, the folding gate olive green. External tiling is of medium warm grey glazed tiles. Internal colours are as follows: all ceilings, the west wall above the window and the office east wall are white; the north and south walls are post office red; the west wall below the window, the entrance lobby and the east wall are grey-green; handrails are of polished steel. Pump bases are of white glazed tiles and the floor is of blue-black quarry tiles: pumps and machinery are painted mid-bronze green, flow pipes bright red, return pipes bright blue. The control panel is french grey.

6, connecting link between workshops and pump house.

9



FLATS AT PIMLICO: PUMP-HOUSE AND WORKSHOPS

7, view through the pump-house to one of the nine-storey flat blocks beyond; the base of the accumulator tower is on the right. 8, the pump-house at night; the pumps are painted mid-bronze green. 9, the link between the pump-house and workshops seen from the sunken garden. 10, on the facing page, the L-shaped workshop building; the lower well panels are of black-painted steel. 11, interior of the workshops, the beams are dark grey and the walls are white sand lime bricks; the window frames are black.

7

8

10

11

the workshops are sited at the south end of the pump-house. As a contrast to the glazed east wall and exposed steel frame of the pump-house, the east wall of the workshops consists almost entirely of brick with a small strip window at a high level, and the concrete frame is internal.

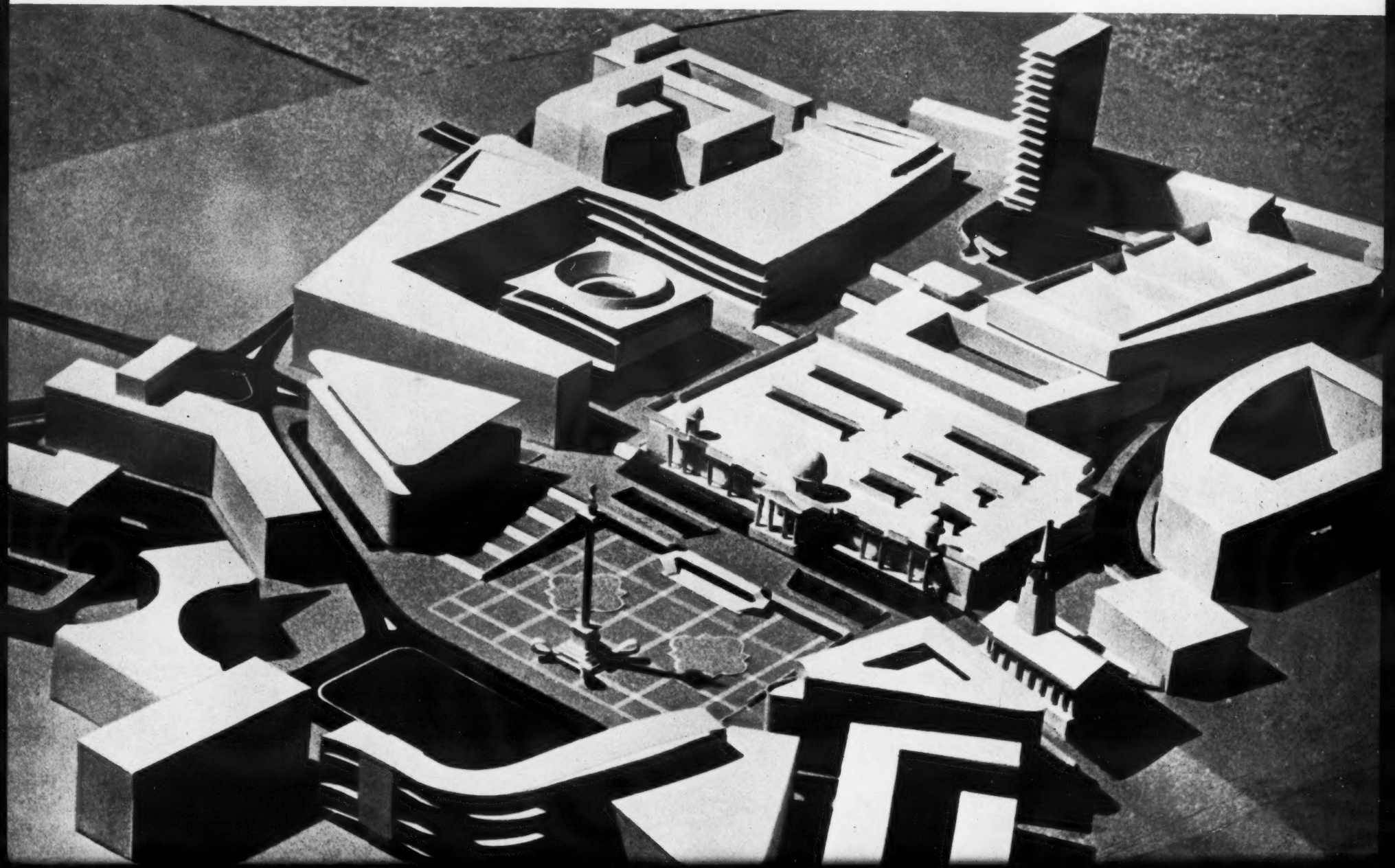
The ground floor contains the unloading bay and an office serving two workshops (one for district heating, and one for housing, maintenance), various store rooms, communal canteen, communal cloakroom and lavatory. The basement provides storage for the Westminster City Engineer and the Director of Housing in addition to housing the main flow and return district heating pipes to Battersea Power Station.

The construction of the ground floor is of reinforced concrete for floor, frame and roof (including a north light) with ½-inch cork insulation above the slab, and screed of three-ply roofing felt. The south and east external walls are cavity brickwork—white flint lime bricks externally, white sand lime bricks internally. North and west walls to cill height are of steel sheet externally and sand lime bricks internally. The floor is of granolithic and internal doors and frames are constructed of hardwood. The basement of the workshops is similar to that of the pump-house.

Colours externally are: brickwork, white flint lime bricks; steel windows and panels below, black; edge of concrete roof, light putty; roller shutter and surrounding steel panels, olive green. Internally the walls are generally of white sand lime brick, while walls to unloading bay, cloakroom, lavatory and one wall of canteen are lavender sand lime bricks. The reinforced concrete frame is dark putty grey and windows are black except for canteen where white is used. Ceilings are white and steel work is generally dark blue-grey. Assistant architect was Martin Hurley.

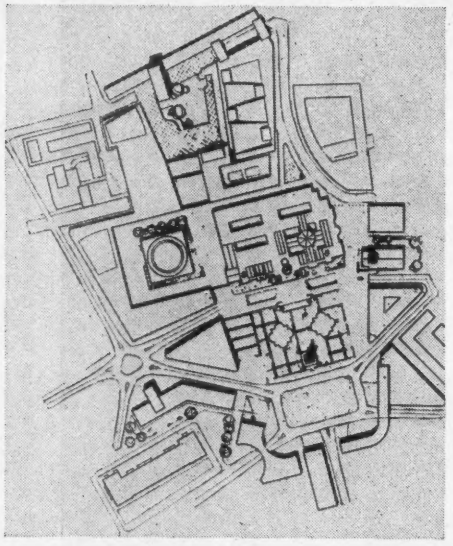
PROPOSALS FOR TRAFALGAR & LEICESTER SQUARES

Plans prepared by students of the Polish University College School of Architecture are here considered by the REVIEW and developed a stage further.

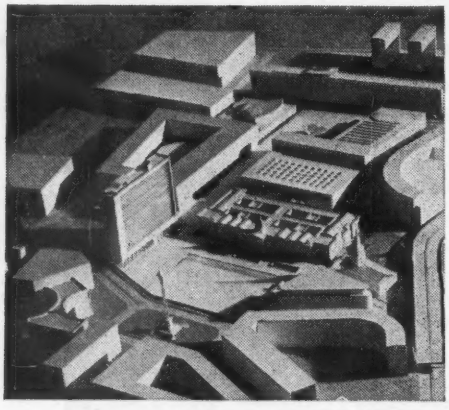


The proposals embodied in the model reproduced on the facing page can be compared with this aerial photograph of Trafalgar and Leicester Squares as they are at present. On the following pages are a number of alternative schemes for long-term replanning, together with a short-term scheme based on the model facing.

POLISH STUDENTS' PROPOSALS



1



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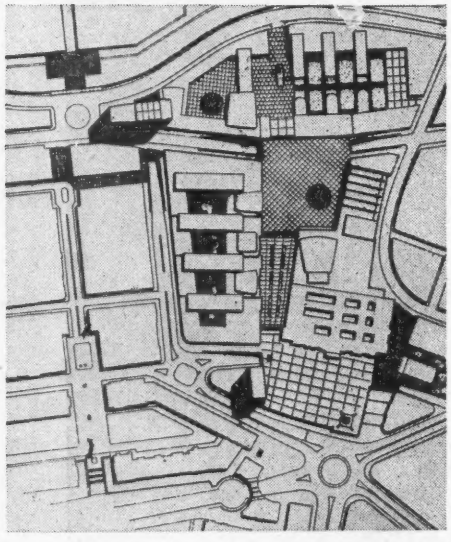

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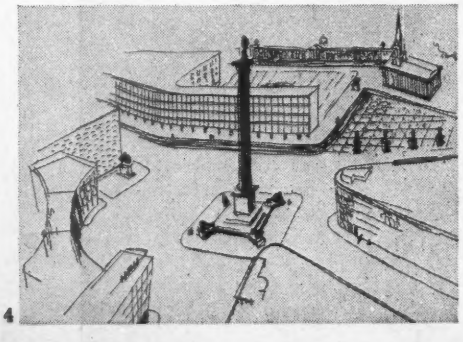

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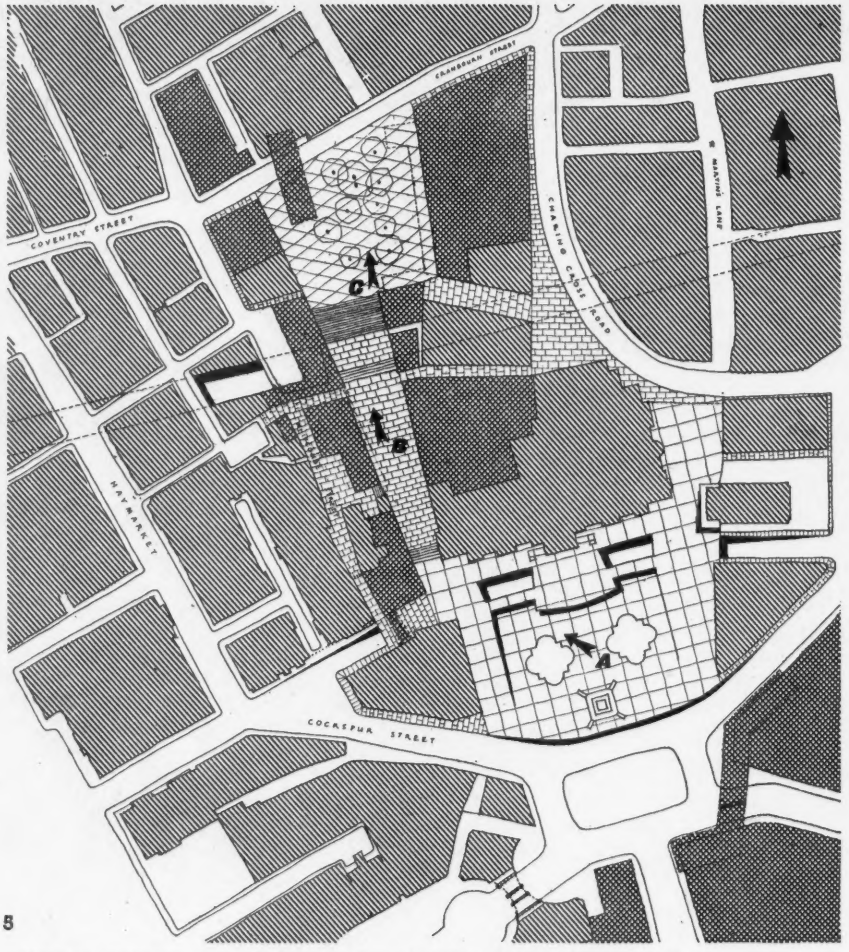


5

SHORT-TERM PROPOSALS BY THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

The lettered viewpoints correspond to the sketches by Donald Dewar Mills on the next two pages. Existing buildings, single hatched; new buildings, cross-hatched.

On the left are four proposals for the Trafalgar Square-Leicester Square area by students of the Polish University College School of Architecture under the direction of W. Konrad Smigielski, who is Assistant Professor of Civic Design. The aim in each was to explore the possibilities of spatial design suggested by the conditions and characteristics of the area. As a result the proposals tend, for practical purposes, to be long-term ones. Since the most important suggestion—the linking of Trafalgar and Leicester Squares—would necessitate neither a vast expenditure of money nor very extensive demolition and reconstruction THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW has developed this particular theme in the plan above and in the perspectives by Donald Dewar Mills on the pages that follow.

In the first scheme, 1,* by J. P. Buzuk, as in the others below it, Trafalgar Square has been released from its present status of a vast traffic roundabout. The existing road along the front of the National Gallery has been taken below ground and all other traffic is taken along the southern boundary. Trafalgar and Leicester Squares are linked by a rising walkway flanked by buildings which include extensions to the National Gallery and, standing in its own small square, a Museum of Modern Art. The vista up this canyon is closed by a large tower building projecting from the north side of Leicester Square. Here again all wheeled traffic is excluded, the Square being planned on two levels, the lower providing an underground through route, a large parking area and a sunken garden, the upper a piazza worthy of the entertainment centre of the West End.

2, by K. Kapolka, attempts to offset the vastness of Trafalgar Square by placing a tall building along the western boundary. This also acts as a foil to the horizontal mass of the National Gallery and closes the vista down the pedestrian way from Leicester Square. Nelson's Column is moved from the piazza to the centre of the traffic roundabout, thus closing the view from all the converging roads.

3, by M. Szymanowski, retains Nelson's Column within the piazza but moves it over on to the axis of Whitehall.

4, by L. Piatkowski, in an attempt to reduce the present excessive size of Trafalgar Square, introduces a building across the south side to enclose a pedestrian piazza and act as a screen between it and the traffic.

5, above, is the modified short-term scheme proposed by THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW in consultation with Professor Smigielski, and

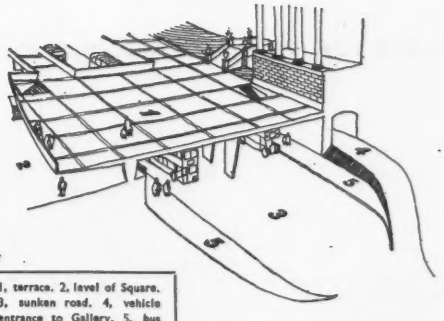
* The model of which is reproduced on page 248. It is this scheme on which THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW's suggestions are primarily based.

viewpoint a

illustrated on this and the following page. The first step in the promotion of Trafalgar Square from its present status as an inaccessible vortex of traffic to that of a civic centre is achieved by banishing all surface traffic to a new intersection on the south and by creating a terrace out of the existing roadway along the face of the National Gallery. Traffic would run beneath this terrace along a road sunk to the same level as the one at the southern end of the Square.

Although the two-level pedestrian piazza is thus freed of cross traffic, the bustle and flow of it is retained both at the new roundabout which defines the southern limit and below the National Gallery terrace which is supported by open arcading. This terrace is widened on the axis of the National Gallery to give additional focal emphasis and also, as shown in the sketch on the right, to provide stopping places for buses and taxis as well as a ramped underground entrance to the Gallery.

Canada House (on the left in the drawing above) is retained to part close and part deflect the vista down the walkway from Leicester Square. The space between Canada House and the National Gallery at present constitutes a 'spatial leak' which the Square can ill afford. In the drawing, therefore, the existing store is shown rebuilt, thus stopping the 'leak', defining the direction of the walkway and disclosing the narrow entrance to it.



key

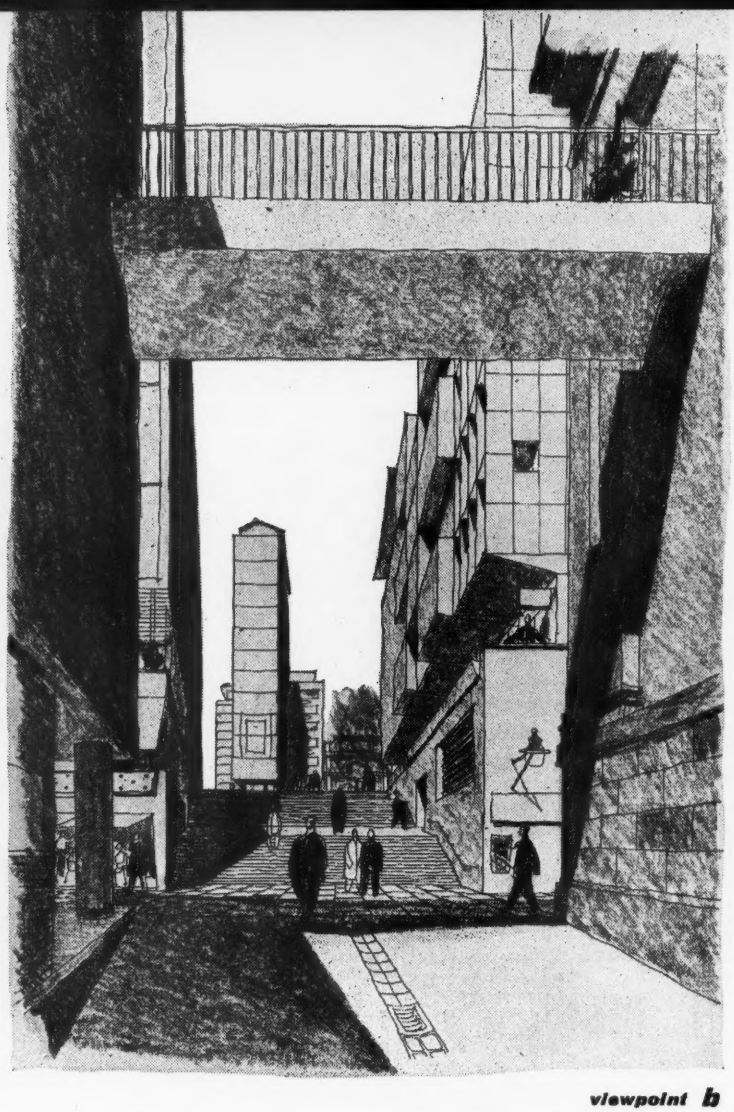
1, terrace. 2, level of Square. 3, sunken road. 4, vehicle entrance to Gallery. 5, bus platforms.

PROPOSALS FOR TRAFALGAR AND LEICESTER SQUARES

The treatment of the Square is frankly 'civic', relying for its character not on subtle irregularity but calculated formality—the scene is set for the occasion rather than the odd moment, which is better catered for in Leicester Square (illustrated at the foot of this page).

Opposite, a view up the pedestrian link, a 'Grand Canyon' focusing on a new high building (the extension to an existing one) at the far side of Leicester Square; the Empire Cinema is just visible to the right of it and appears again in the drawing below. Narrow ways interweave with this main stem leading off to backwaters of the pedestrian network. Here the character changes from the studied formality of Trafalgar Square to the intricacy of busy offices, cafés, shops and so on; this is in fact the existing Whitcombe Street area.

The scene is now set for Leicester Square (below), a focal point for entertainment. Cafés and restaurants extend out over the paved floor and among the trees, the obstructive railings disappear and the Square becomes a large playroom whose walls are unashamedly decorated in the vernacular of the showman. Here the level differs from that suggested in the schemes by the Polish students; the present ground level of the square is retained and so is the road on the north side, for the colour and movement of traffic is entirely appropriate to the uninhibited effects of a pleasure piazza.



viewpoint **b**

PROPOSALS FOR TRAFALGAR AND LEICESTER SQUARES

viewpoint **c**

1, *looking north with the offices in the foreground*

HANGAR AND OFFICES, COLLINSTOWN AIRPORT, DUBLIN

ARCHITECTS: HUGH ROBERTS AND DAVIES

This hangar has been designed for the maintenance of the aeroplanes used by Aer Lingus, the Irish air line. On the south side of the hangar and facing the entrance to the airport is a two-storey block, the ground floor of which is used for stores and workshops and the first floor for offices for the air line operational staff, who previously occupied the main terminal building. The site of the new hangar had to conform to a long-term planning scheme for the development of the airport, and is the first part of a large scheme envisaged in connection with an Irish transatlantic service.

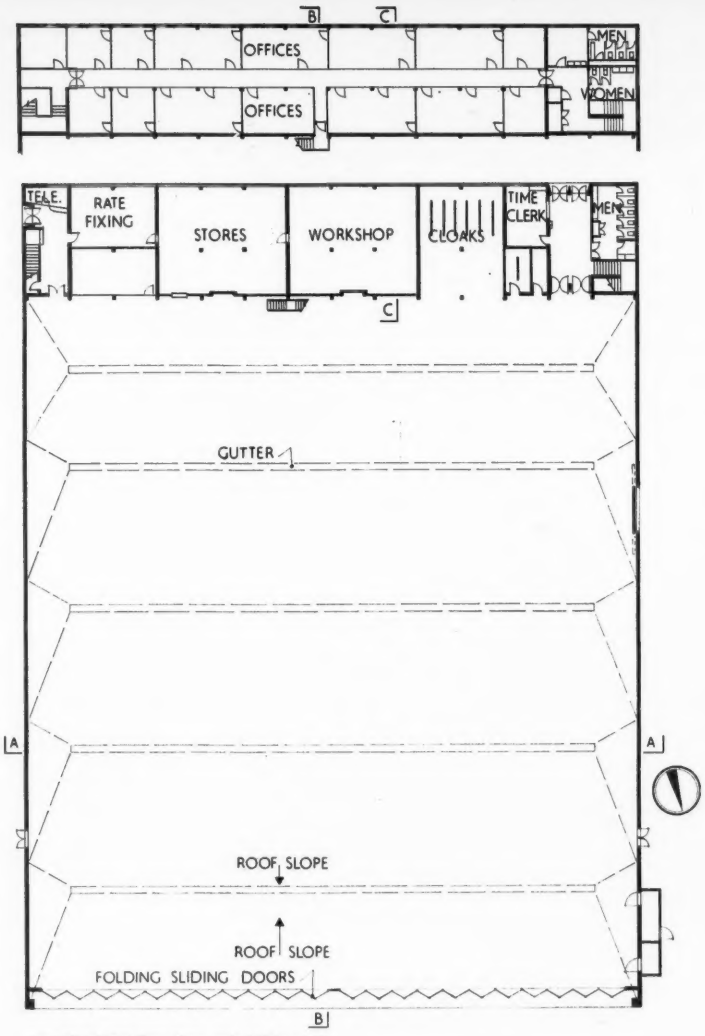
The building is steel-framed and the hangar roof is a combination of lattice girders and north lights with a span of 175 feet. There are sliding-folding doors, up to a

2, *interior of the main hangar*

Hangar and Offices, Collinstown Airport, Dublin

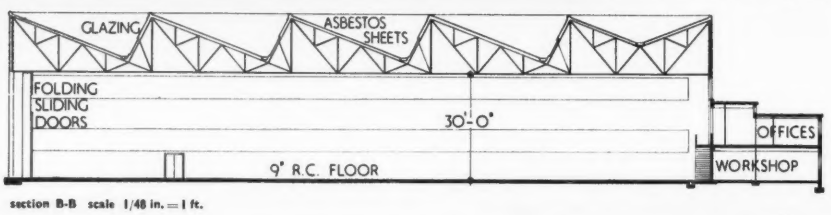
height of 30 feet, at the north end of the hangar. The offices, which are also steel framed, have precast concrete floors and roofs.

Wherever possible, materials used were manufactured locally. External cladding is of asbestos sheeting and internal cladding inside the hangar is of insulation board. Special Z type aluminium flashing is used on the horizontal joints of the aluminium sheeting. The office walls are of concrete blocks, rendered externally, and the windows are of aluminium. The external rendering has been made to match the colour of the terminal and other buildings. Most of the offices are formed by movable metal partitions to facilitate future changes of layout. Floors in the offices, in the staff entrance and on the stairs have cork tiles.



ground and first floor plans scale 1/48 in. = 1 ft.

3, clerestory glazing above the office windows overlooking the main hangar floor



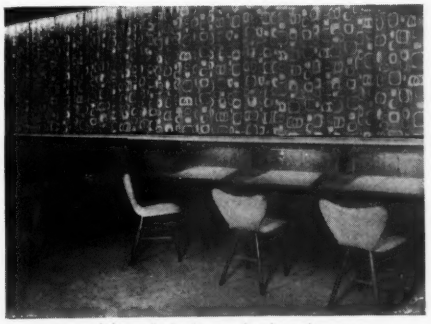
section B-B scale 1/48 in. = 1 ft.

FESTIVAL INFORMATION CENTRE

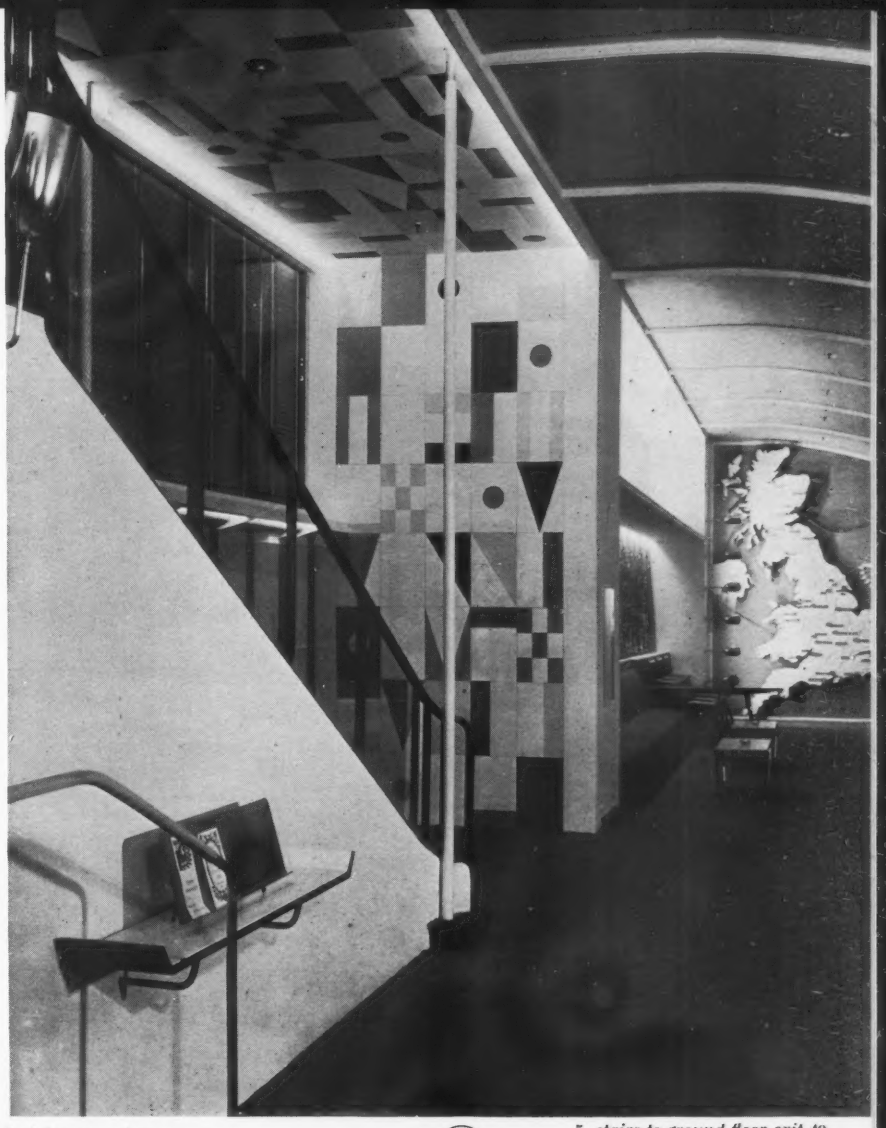
ARCHITECT: JACQUES GROAG

The Festival of Britain Office took over an area of approximately 4,000 square feet on the lower ground floor of a large department store in Piccadilly Circus as an Information Centre. Provision was made for access through the normal shop entrance, from the shop itself and from the Underground concourse. Partition walls are of wooden studs and plaster board or painted fireproof hardboard. The suspended ceiling, which was constructed to conceal a break down from south to north in the existing ceiling, is of fibrous plaster between wood trusses hung to the existing ceiling. Sprinklers are incorporated as a decorative feature. Other ceilings are of fibreboard on fireproof joists. A central pier, which remains just behind the long counter, has mirrors on either side, and in front is fixed a frame containing a map of Greater London, above which are louvres. By these means the solid pier was entirely hidden from view.

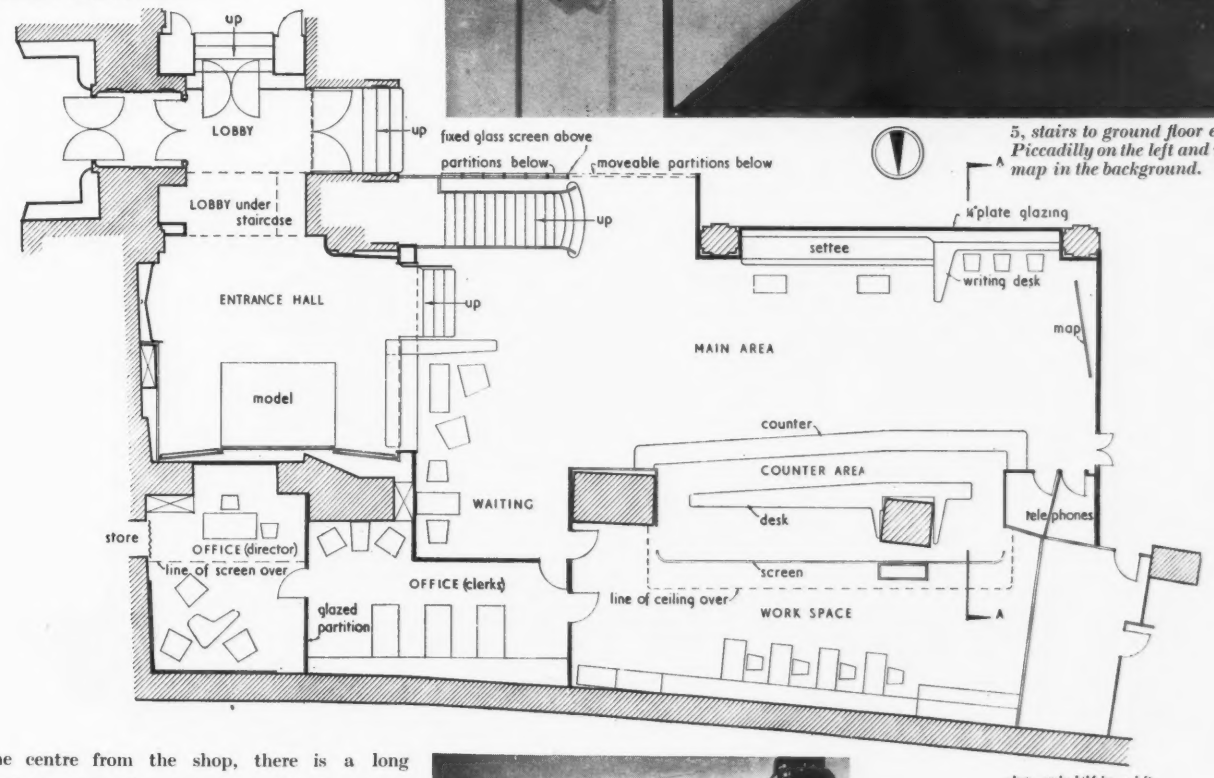
The ceiling is pale green; the back wall, behind the raised map, vermilion. On the wall dividing the centre from the shop, there is a long curtain with a yellow-green background designed by Jacqueline Groag; the waiting recess has yellow walls and a white ceiling. The entrance hall has a dark blue wall as background to the model. The waiting space has yellow walls, white ceiling, a vermilion carpet and light fittings specially designed by Jacques Groag. The main inquiry area has a grey carpet. The wood used is mostly mahogany; and metal furniture legs and supports have brass or anodized aluminium caps.



4, writing desk in main inquiry area



5, stairs to ground floor exit to Piccadilly on the left and raised map in the background.



plan scale 1/16 in. = 1 ft

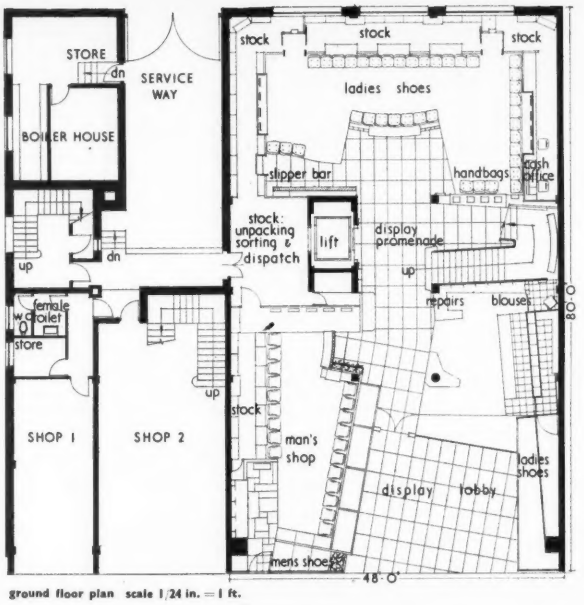
6, chairs by Robin Day and table by Jacques Groag

7 *The road facade looking south-east.*

SHOE STORE AT PLYMOUTH

ARCHITECT : E. SOMAKE

The store illustrated here replaces Messrs. Dolcis' Plymouth shop, which was destroyed by enemy bombing. It forms a part of the Abercrombie scheme for the replanning of the city. A reinforced concrete frame has been used in conjunction with continuous reinforced concrete slabs. The front line of columns has been set back 3 feet from the building line, and the boxed-out portion of the north elevation is hung on cantilevered reinforced concrete spandrel panels. External walls are 13½-inch non-load-bearing brickwork. The materials used on the main façade are reconstructed unpolished Clipsham stone panels between glazing, the whole contained within a frame of reconstructed polished Portland stone. The recessed portion is faced with 2-inch golden-brown bricks with flush joints. The continuous sashes are of purpose-made natural aluminium. The rear elevation is faced with 2⅝-inch flint lime bricks.



ground floor plan scale 1/24 in. = 1 ft.

8

9

8 and 9, the children's department on the first floor.

Howard Colvin

ROGER NORTH AND SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN

Roger North (1653-1734), *although unknown to the architectural reference books, was not only the author of what H. M. Colvin here calls 'the most entertaining treatise on building in the English language' but also the designer of a prominent London building long attributed to Wren—the Middle Temple Gateway. Mr. Colvin's is the first published study of North's architectural thought and activities.*

IN THE HISTORY of architecture, as in that of other arts, there is a tendency for the achievement of a period to be identified with the career of one man: for the names of his contemporaries to be forgotten, while their works are vaguely ascribed to a 'school' of which he is supposed to have been at once the founder, the director, and the residuary legatee. In England, it is the seventeenth century which illustrates this tendency best. There used, in fact, to be a time when every Jacobean house was attributed to Inigo Jones, and every post-Restoration one to Sir Christopher Wren. Now, thanks to Mr. Gotch and the Wren Society, we know better. But we still know too little about the lesser architects of the period. Their works are not recorded, and their personalities elude us. Their anonymity is, in fact, more complete than that of their medieval predecessors, because the great works of the middle ages were paid for by royal or ecclesiastical patrons whose accounts are still available for examination, whereas the papers of those who built the country houses of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries have been retained for the most part in private (and too often in irresponsible) hands. Indeed, it is already too late: the dissolution of the great houses is proceeding as inexorably as that of the monasteries four centuries ago, and with at least as great a destruction of records. But occasionally it is possible to save something from the wreckage, and in so doing to bring back to life one of these forgotten names in the history of English architecture.

The papers upon which this article is based were rescued as long ago as 1883. But the name of their writer, the Honourable Roger North, does not figure in any architectural reference book. His autobiography, which was published in 1887,[1] does, it is true, contain a chapter devoted to 'Architectural and Mathematical Studies.' But the casual reader might be pardoned for supposing that its author took no more than an academic interest in the former. For a row of editorial asterisks has been silently substituted for ten pages of manuscript describing the equipment of what Roger called his 'Architectonicall Desk,' and there is nothing elsewhere in the autobiography

[1] *The Autobiography of the Hon. Roger North*, ed. A. Jessopp (privately printed 1887). It was reprinted in 1890 in the third volume of *The Lives of the Norths*, ed. Jessopp.

Middle Temple gateway in Fleet Street, hitherto thought to have been the work of Wren, but identified in the accompanying article as being by Roger North.

to suggest that he was the author of the most entertaining treatise on building in the English language, and the architect of what has long been regarded as 'one of Sir Christopher Wren's finest minor works.'[2]

Roger was born in 1653, the sixth and youngest son of Dudley, fourth Lord North, a learned and cultivated nobleman whose chief luxuries were his books and the maintenance of an organist at his seat at Kirtling in Cambridgeshire. Like his brother Francis, afterwards Lord Chancellor Guildford, Roger was educated for the law, and partly by his own abilities, partly through his brother's influence, he had a not unsuccessful career at the bar. But although the law provided Roger with a profession, it by no means monopolized his mind, and in the course of a long life he found time to study optics and mathematics, to observe and take notes on the experiments which led to the invention of the steam-engine,[3] to listen to and to write about music,[4] to collect pictures, to plant—and to build.

Although never a member of the Royal Society, Roger was, nevertheless, in touch with the intellectual and scientific ideas of his time. He had read Descartes at Cambridge at a time when 'the new philosophy was a sort of heresy,' he had attempted to arrive 'at a system of nature, upon the Cartesian, or rather mechanical principles,' he was an expert at dialling, and as a 'dabbler in mechanics . . . fell into that disease that all tyros in that art do, a conceit of having found a perpetual motion.' For a person of these tastes the transition from science to architecture was an easy one, as it had been for Robert Hooke and Sir Christopher Wren before him. For was not architecture, in Evelyn's words, 'the flower and crown as it were of all the sciences mathematical,' the supreme employment for a man with a mechanical head and a philosophical mind? But a young lawyer has few opportunities to develop a latent talent for architecture, and but for the fire which destroyed the Temple in 1678, Roger might never have counted building among his 'mechanical entertainments.' As it was, he played a prominent part in the negotiations between the gentlemen of the Middle Temple and Nicholas Barbon, the principal undertaker of their new buildings, and it was in 'drawing the model of my little chamber, and making patterns for the wainscot' that he learnt the use of a scale and tasted for the first time 'the joys of designing and executing known only to such as practise or have practised it.'

This, however, was 'but a beginning'. Soon Roger was buying the architectural text-books of the day, Palladio, Scamozzi, and Evelyn's invaluable *Parallel of the Antient Architecture with the Modern*. He taught himself the principles of perspective, and spent many happy hours in drawing 'which might have been better and more profitably employed.' Architecture, in fact, became a passion second only to that for music, and Roger's active mind delighted in the technicalities of building just as it did in the niceties of draughtsmanship. At a time when a knowledge of architecture was a polite accomplishment rather than a professional qualification, he was soon as well equipped to design an actual building as any of his better-known contemporaries, not excluding the surveyor-general himself, with whom he had by now come into contact. For Wren had been called in by the Benchers to regulate the design of their new buildings and to pass the workmen's accounts, which North, as Treasurer, had to settle. But his own interest in the progress of the work was more than merely financial, and a passage in his essay on building gives strong grounds for thinking that it was he and not Wren who designed the Great Gateway in Fleet Street which was built in 1683-4 by Shorthose and Lem, as master-mason and master-bricklayer respectively.[5] 'When I built ye Temple gate,' he tells us, 'I designed 4 pilaster columes, and a frontoon (i.e. a pediment). But it being necessary for preserving ye dignity of such a fabrick, between very high houses to rais ye frontoon eves, above the Cornish

[2] A. E. Richardson and C. L. Gill, *London Houses from* 1660 *to* 1820 (1911), p. 51.

[3] See *Links in the History of Engineering and Technology from Tudor Times: The Collected Papers of Rhys Jenkins* (Newcomen Society 1936) for Roger North's notes on Steam-engines.

[4] His *Memoires of Musick, being some Historico—critticall Collections on that Subject* 1728, were edited by Dr. Rimbault in 1846.

[5] See *Middle Temple Records*, edited by C. H. Hopwood (iii) (1905), pp. 1363, 1364, 1365, 1367 for the building of the gateway.

of ye houses, which would not addmitt such a distribution, taken from ye bottom, and 2 Columes had bin too imens for our Materiall as well as room, not to mention ye purs, Therefore I raised ye first story with Rustick stone, and made a flatt arch for ye coaches to pass, whereby I gained ye Greatest passage height I could: and compass ones for ye shopps, lower so as to lay ye thrust of ye other upon ye solid, clear of ye void, and set ballconys over these compass arches. Then a fillet of stone, and above that a deep plane, which served as stylobate, or foundation for ye Columnes, being more in height then ordinary, and upon that sett ye bases, by which means the Columnes were brought into due proportion to ye height, and all together hath no ill aspect. I could not compass ye Midle Arch, and flatt ye side ones, because ye story above must be preserved, but that bin much more proper.'[6]

No doubt the surveyor-general was there to advise him on technical matters and to help with the estimates, but it is clear from this account that the architectural features of the gateway were due to Roger North alone. Later on, in fact, he actually records that Wren tried to persuade him to employ wood and plaster in the pediment and entablature in order to save expense, 'but out of a proud high spirit I declined it, and made ye whole intablature and frontoon of stone, and it is as lusty, as most are.'

One thing which emerges from the story of the Middle Temple Gateway is that for the Benchers Wren was not so much the architect as the surveyor. As Mr. Summerson has put it, he 'was called in as a practical expert on building matters rather than as a distinguished artist,'[7] and if one of the Templars knew enough about the Orders to compose a façade and set it down on paper, nobody thought it odd that he and not Wren should design their new gateway.

Roger himself had no use for surveyors, 'or such as wee call Architects.' 'For a profest architect is proud, opiniative and troublesome, seldome at hand, and a head workman pretending to ye designing part, is full of paultry vulgar contrivances, therefore be your owne architect, or sitt still.' Surveyors, in his opinion, were only 'for princes, and great men and not for private gentlemen, who have neither ye purs nor interest to purchas such costly councell as theirs is.' In any case a good surveyor is hard to come by: 'Inigo Jones was one, who did all things well and great. But since then has bin, Pratt for Clarendon hous, Webb for Greenwich Gallery, and Gonnersbury, and at present Sir Christopher Wren, dexterous men: especially ye latter, as to accounts and computation, but have not ye Grand Maniere of Jones.'

It was 'ye Grand Maniere of Jones' which Roger found lacking at Hampton Court. 'It is towards ye Garden and Park, of a square forme, (so) pink't full of holes, some round, and some oblong, others square: that were it not for ye angles, which hinders the Rotundity of view, one would take it rather for an ampitheatre, than an habitation. And ye order of round windows . . . seem port holes in a Royal Cittadell, and would give one a conceipt as if Gunns peept out there. But that which is worst of all, there is nothing rising at ye Angles, as pavilions, or Ayering chambers above ye comon Rang of ye Roof, nor no larg rising frontoon with a grand order in ye Midle, but a small one, having short columnes, like ye midle door within of an old fashioned cabinett. And the whole line of ye roof flatt and strait, but Balustred, which looks like ye teeth of a comb and doth in no sort answer the Grandeur of a Royall palace.'

Clearly the writer was not an unqualified admirer of Wren's works, though he thought better of Chelsea Hospital and of the 'Great Hous begun at Winchester (pitty it is that it hath not its perfection)'. But he was evidently on good terms with the surveyor-general, and he tells us how he and his brother Dudley used often to go to St. Paul's on Saturdays, 'which were Sir Christopher Wren's days, who was the surveyor; and we commonly got a snatch of discourse with him, who, like a true philosopher, was always obliging and communicative and, in every matter we inquired about, gave short but satisfactory answers.'[8] These conversations are not without an interest of their own, for Roger asked leading questions, and Wren gave characteristic answers.

Why, for instance, in the exterior of the cathedral did the Surveyor break his entablatures over the pilasters, contrary to classical precedent, and (in Roger's opinion) without æsthetic justification? For the reason which compelled Inigo Jones to do the same in the exterior of the Banqueting House. 'For they could not have Materialls to make good single columnes nor to project ye Entabletures so farr as to rang strait over ye heads of ye columnes but were forc't in ye one, to double ye orders and in ye other to double both columnes and ye orders, and in both to break ye Entablements without: which shift Sir Christopher Wren informed me of when I observed to him ye exility of his columnes, with Respect to ye Grandeur of his fabrick at Paulls.'

More amusing, and more revealing in its suggestion of Wren's essentially intellectual approach to architecture, is his reply to North's question about the design of the Queen's Apartments at Whitehall. 'In exceeding high rooms,' Roger writes, 'it is best for them and us to have high windoes square above ye others to light ye Roof, which els will be too dark, and consequently dull. These were not made in My Queen's appartment by ye water side in Whitehall altho' I thought ye sort of building had required it. I ask't Sir Chr. Wren ye Reason of it, and he answered, that ye Reflexion of ye sky from ye water would be light enough to ye Roof, which was an ingenious thought and fully satisfied me.'

But the most precious of these fragments of Wren's conversation, casually introduced by Roger into the text of his notes on Building, is on the subject of æsthetics. 'In the next place,' he says, 'I think to discours a litle of Beauty, and the true principle on which it depends. For I doe not thinck any thing is less studdy'd, knowne, or more mistaken than that is. I had once some discourse with Sir Chr. Wren on this subject, who for argument sake, held that there was that distinction in Nature of graceful and ugly; and that it must be so to all creatures that had vision. I maintained that there was no such distinction in Nature but it arose from the judgment and use of things. He alledged, that of triangules, an Equilater, was more agreable than a scalene, and some other such instances, as the stated demensions of Columnes, which I shall consider anon.'

Now in thus upholding what Geoffrey Scott might have called the Geometrical Fallacy, Wren was not striking out a new theory just 'for argument sake.' For in his own considered summary of æsthetics, printed in *Parentalia*, he adopts precisely the same standpoint, laying it down as an axiom that 'There are two Causes of Beauty, natural and customary,' of which 'Natural is from Geometry, consisting in Uniformity (that is Equality) and Proportion.'[9]

Roger's own ideas about Beauty were hardly less arbitrary, for he too attempts to explain visual experience in general philosophical terms in a not altogether convincing way. His guiding principle is that 'knowledge pleaseth and ignorance, or surprise, ye contrary.'

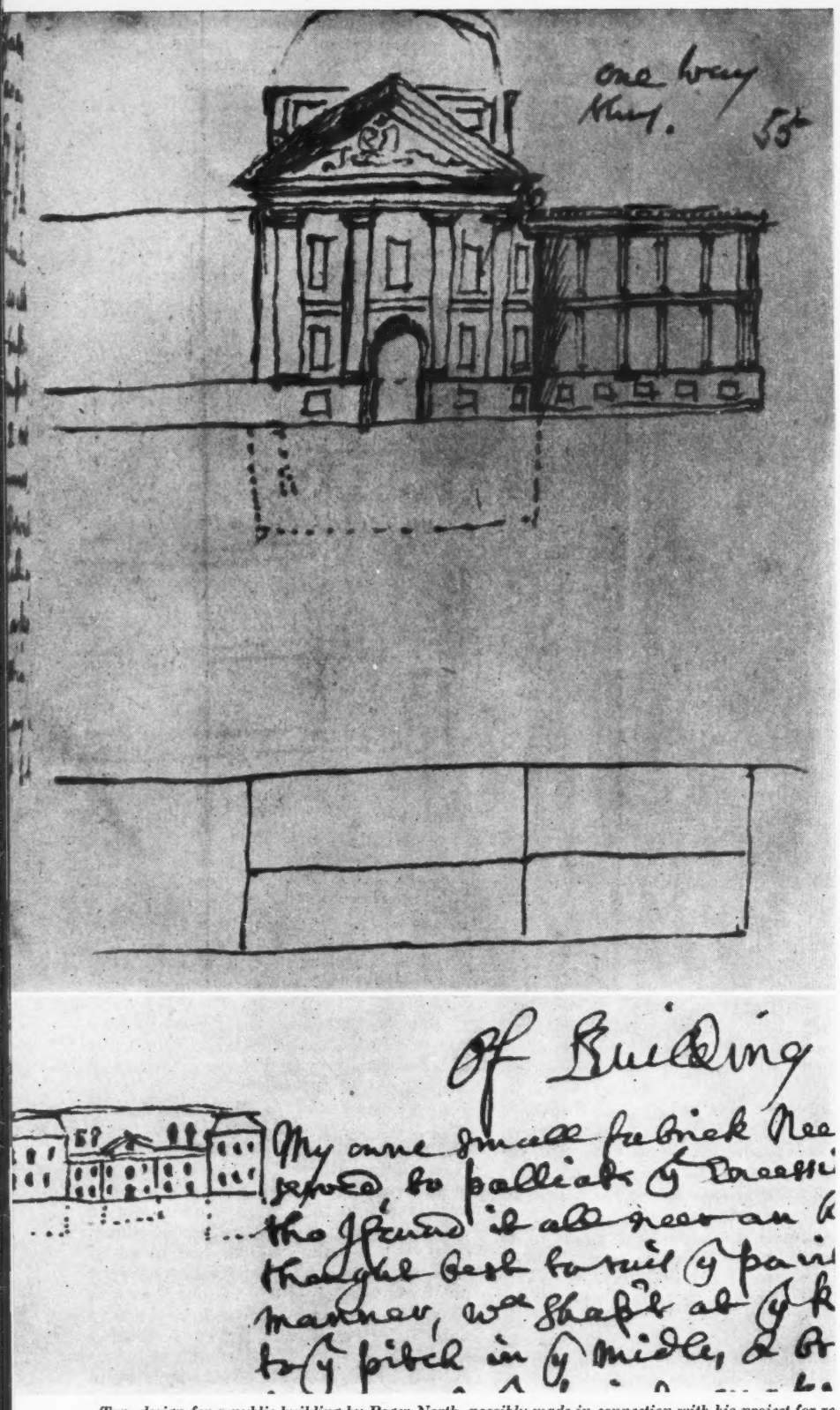
'Now apply this speculation to our subject, building. First uniformity is pleasant. For that consists of intelligible parts layd out in due proportions so that ye whole is better comprehended, then if it were of discordent and disorderly parts without Relation to each other.' From this it follows that classical architecture is superior to Gothic, in so far as the former is based on recognized rules, embodied in 'ye doctrine of ye 5 orders,' while the latter is a capricious mode of building 'introduct by a Barbarous sort of people that first distrest then disolved ye Roman Empire.' Nevertheless Roger North was not altogether devoid of feeling for Gothic. He perceived that there were '3 periods of ye Gothick building' long before Rickman gave them a name, and he had to admit that much medieval architecture 'bears not onely an air of Grandeur, but hath a strength and reasonableness beyond ye other (i.e. Romanesque). And is such as an extraordinary high spirited judicious Barbarian might be supposed originally to invent.' He joined with his friend Evelyn in deploring 'The unaccountable notching and fringing all parts of ye fabrick, as H. 7 Chappell, which is lost to ye Ey at distance, and neer hand is not understood,' but at the same time he was anxious 'to doe those good men that built our churches right,' and 'profess that in ye ordinance of

[6] British Museum, Additional MS. 32,540, f. 37 *verso*.

[7] I am indebted to Mr. Summerson for permission to quote from an unpublished paper on the architecture of the Temple which he has kindly allowed me to read in MS.

[8] *The Lives of the Norths* (ii), p. 238.

[9] Quoted by John Summerson in 'The Tyranny of Intellect: A Study of the Mind of Sir Christopher Wren, in relation to the thought of his time,' *R.I.B.A. Journal*, volume 44, p. 386.



Top, design for a public building by Roger North, possibly made in connection with his project for rebuilding Whitehall Palace. Below, a sketch in the margin of Roger North's essay Of Building *showing the front of the house he bought for himself in* 1690 *at Rougham in Norfolk, after rebuilding.*

walls and abbutment they have done as much as is possible, to make ye stone and lime work its utmost, and that now wee have not any that will venture to set such weight upon so small support, and I question whether they are able, or have ye skill they had to calculate those propositions.'

His own contribution to English architecture was not large, for unlike his friend Hugh May or that other gentleman surveyor Sir Roger Pratt, he never became a 'profest architect,' and did not 'pretend either to great publick designes, nor new models of great houses.'[10] Between 1685 and 1690 he carried out considerable alterations at Wroxton Abbey in Oxfordshire, the seat of his brother Lord Guildford, but without making any important addition to the existing structure. In 1690 he bought himself a large but old-fashioned house at Rougham in Norfolk[11] which he proceeded to remodel gradually, as his purse allowed, adding a gallery at the back, and an Ionic portico in front. He also built a library on the north side of Rougham church, to which he left his large collection of books when he died in 1734. But before the end of the eighteenth century 'not one stone was left upon another' of the house which he had so carefully reconstructed, the library itself had been destroyed, and the books dispersed. Luckily his own papers survived, to be acquired by the British Museum in 1883. Among them is that racy, discursive, but always amusing discourse 'of Building'[12] upon which this article is chiefly based, but whose fund of architectural anecdote is by no means exhausted by the story of Roger North and his relations with Sir Christopher Wren.

[10] He did, however, leave rough notes of a 'Project of Rebuilding' Whitehall Palace after the fire of January 1697-8 (Additional MS. 32,504, f. 54).

[11] The privately printed edition of North's *Autobiography* contains in an appendix a detailed account of his alterations at Rougham from a MS. which does not seem to have been acquired by the British Museum.

[12] Additional MS. 32,540. Additional MS. 23,005 contains a number of architectural drawings by Roger North, including a survey of Wroxton Abbey (folio 7).

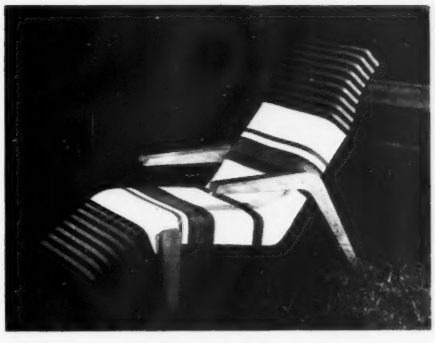
postscript A casual reference by Roger North to 'Mr. Guy's hous, at Tring, built by Sir Christopher Wren' (Additional MS. 32,540, f. 48 *verso*) proves that the attribution of this house to Wren in *Wren Society*, Volume XIX (plate 73) is correct.

FURNITURE

CHAIRS FROM BRAZIL

Most of the Brazilian chairs illustrated here are of the 'knock-down' type, and are designed for sale in the

1



2

interior of the country. Basically, the construction is simple and the furniture could be built in any factory with the usual wood-working machinery. At the same time, mass-production methods of laminating plywood are implied in some of the designs. The chaise-longues, 1 and 2, designed in the Bauhaus tradition, use laminated plywood members. They are held together with screws and are demountable as are the chairs in 3, also of plywood, but held rigid with wooden pins. No springs are used and the upholstery is reduced to a minimum, as in 6. The chairs in 7 are constructed of thick laminations for rough

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

use, and have canvas seats and backs, laced behind; the high humidity of Brazil causes most types of fabric to rot, and it is important to allow for simple changes of upholstery. The chairs, 4 and 5, are strikingly different from the others illustrated here. They are constructed of simple wood turnings and belong to the individual craft tradition, to the workshop rather than the factory; 4, with strapped canvas seat and back, has a Shaker severity; 5, with its woven rush-work, is notable for its peculiarly designed back. The bent tubular chair-frame of 8 supports a loosely slung canvas seat. It has a misleading visual affinity with 9, a three-legged chair of exceptionally strong Brazilian hardwood.

10

The auditorium seats in 10 show an interesting variation on the principle of stacking chairs. Of light, solid wood, they have laced-up canvas upholstery. 11 uses two laminated plywood members which can be detached from the seat and back

11

12

to be packed flat. Another example of tubular metal furniture, 12, is a tip-up cinema seat with bent wood back and upholstered arms and seat.

The plywood used is made of Paranà pine-wood and is given a clear, waxed finish. The solid woods are Pau Marfim, a very clear wood; Embuia, which is similar to European walnut, and Cedar, red, like mahogany, and heavily scented. All the chairs were designed by Lina Bo Bardi, who has supervised all phases of their manufacture.

HISTORY

ANOTHER SIDE TO PAXTON

We have heard much this year of Paxton the pioneer of iron and glass and Paxton the pioneer of prefabrication, something also of Paxton the ingenious horticulturist. It may be as well, for a just appreciation of his personality, to record a very different aspect of his work. The buildings here illustrated are all designed by him (or, at least, for him by his son-in-law, George H. Stokes), and built as his to please wealthy and influential clients. They are neither original, nor progressive, nor ingenious—they are entirely in the day-to-day run of large-scale mid-Victorian domestic architecture, with nothing to single them out from others. These traditional buildings by Paxton had remained unnoticed, or little noticed, until Mr. Ian H. Abbott, in a recent yet unpublished thesis, devoted a chapter to them. The photographs here shown are his and the comments on the buildings are based on information received from him.

1 and 2, Mentmore House, Bucks. Designed in 1850 for Baron Meyer Amschel de Rothschild. The client wanted something Jacobean, but the idea of erecting a

1

copy of Wollaton Hall in Notts was apparently not his, but Paxton's. Even the material, Ancaster stone, is the same at Wollaton. The central great hall has a glazed, ridge and furrow roof, of the kind Paxton had invented for his glass-houses and used at the Crystal Palace. The house

2

was completed in 1855—its interior in a sumptuous Louis XIV style.

3, Ferrière, twenty miles east of Paris, 1853-59 for Baron James de Rothschild. The general shape is similar to Mentmore, but the building is larger, and some

3

features, such as the pavilion roofs of the angle towers, have a decided French

4

flavour about them. In the centre is a hall 130 by 130 feet.

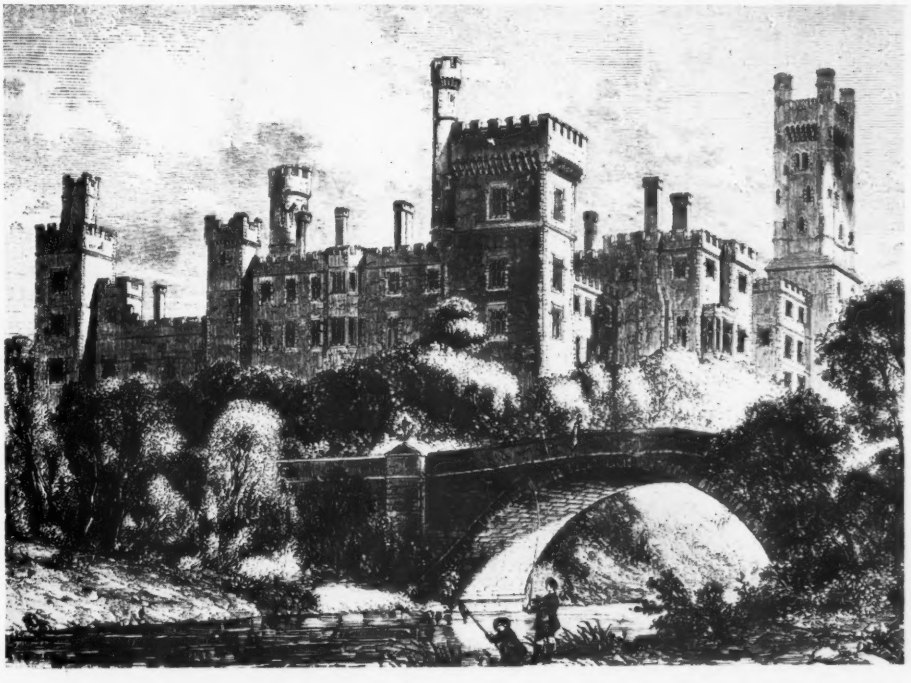
4, Lismore Castle, County Waterford, Ireland. From *The Building News* 1858. Extensive alterations and additions were made to the medieval castle for the Duke of Devonshire, 1853-56. The illustration shows these completed.

5, Barbrook House, Paxton's own house on the Chatsworth Estate. The style here adopted is that of the Italianate Villa, with low roof pitches, far projected eaves on brackets, an asymmetrically placed square tower featuring slim windows in broad flat surrounds. All these characteristic features

5

6

are familiar from Loudon's *Encyclopædia* and had been used on the Chatsworth Estate at Edensor model village as early as 1830, especially in the house of Miss Thornhill, 6 (see P. R. F. Donner, *AR*, Vol. 95, 1944).



INDOOR PLANTS

TETRASTIGMA VONENERIARTA

Like Cissus striata (*see AR April* 1951) *the* Tetrastigmas *are tendril climbers of the order* Vitaceae. *About forty species grow in tropical and sub-tropical Asia.* *Tetrastigma voneneriarta* or the 'Chestnut' vine is a strong-growing, large evergreen and is an admirable house plant. It needs strong sunshine in summer. Though needing heat it will survive low temperatures provided the changes are not too sudden. The plant should be kept fairly moist at the roots when actively growing. All these tendril climbers need support and although they can be trained up screens made from expanded metal or wire, they seem to prefer cord or wood for reasons best known to themselves. They should be stopped occasionally and trained, and lateral stems should be encouraged.

The 'Chestnut' vine is particularly effective against plain wall surfaces and to my mind gives far greater visual pleasure than some of the more expensive tropical

pot plants. It associates well with *Rhoicissus* and is pleasant if grown near to, and in contrast with, some of the smaller-leaved climbers such as the Cissus striata.

H. F. Clark

POPULAR ART

PAINTED RUSTICS

The painted rustication that is so remarkable a feature of many buildings in Ireland has already formed the subject of two articles in the *REVIEW*, by John Piper in July, 1943, and by Osbert Lancaster in January,

1

2

1948.* In view of the striking visual qualities of the device, however, and of its great interest as the product of a still thriving vernacular art, the publication of some more photographs needs no excuse.

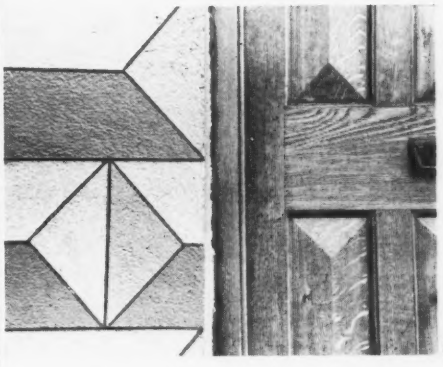
Presumably, as has been pointed out, this painted rustication derives in the last analysis from that form of real rustication in which the face of each stone is given a pyramidal shape; and of which the best known examples are provided by the so-

3

called Palazzi dei Diamanti at Ferrara and at Verona and by the Palazzo Bevilacqua at Bologna. How the motif got to Ireland remains obscure; Mr. Lancaster suggested that the Italian plasterers who were active in Dublin in the early eighteenth century may have brought it. In any case, it constitutes an enormously valuable enrichment of the Irish scene, giving weight and consequence to many buildings which would otherwise be lacking in those

4

qualities. Of the examples illustrated here, 1 and 2 and the wall in 3, whose coping has so curiously ambiguous an effect, are at Roscommon. In 5, at Hilltown, and 6, at Bangor, the pyramid form is abandoned and the treatment is boldly linear. 4, at



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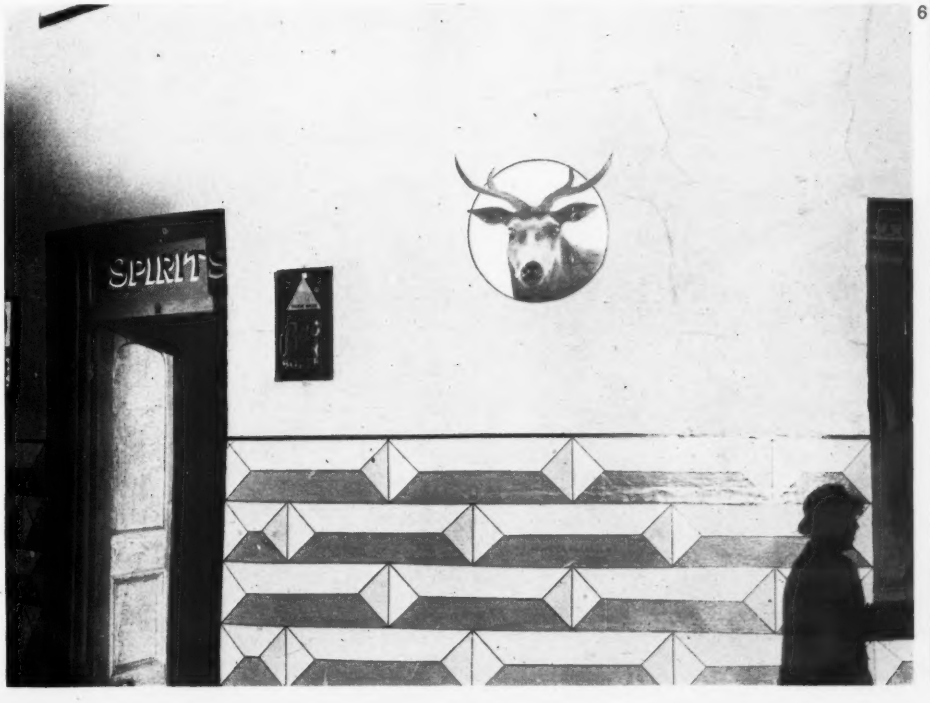
Cabinteely, shows the device alongside that other traditional decorative art in which the Irish excel, marbling.



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* Readers will have noticed its highly successful use in the Festival Pleasure Gardens at Battersea.

EXHIBITIONS

CANTERBURY THROUGH THE AGES

A blitzed site near the centre of Canterbury was chosen for a Festival exhibition with the above title. On it, in addition to rubble and quick-growing plants, there remained the ruins of a second century Roman town house as well as the walls of a mediæval friary. All these elements as well as existing changes of level have been exploited in designing the various parts of the exhibition.* The theme of the exhibition is the part played by the City of Canterbury in the history of Great Britain and the Christian world. In the first section a wild, overgrown area has been retained to suggest the natural scene in pre-Roman times. The path winds out of it on to a platform leading to the regularly planned section on Roman Canterbury. A high background wall of yellow, black and red

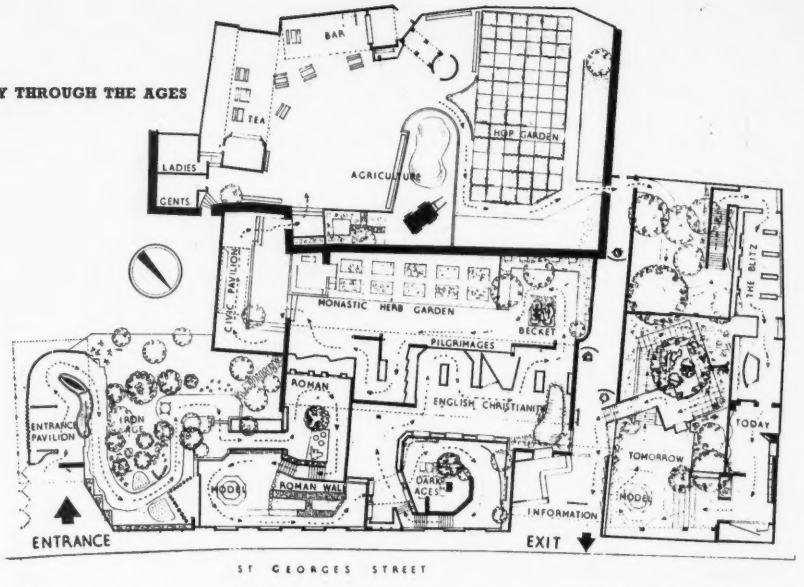
1

flettons provides an exciting foretaste of the exhibition's rich collection of decorative brickwork. Reinforced concrete and steel supports here are juxtaposed with ruined walls of rough stone. On the lower level the Saxon period, 1, is displayed with photographs surrounding a tall pagan idol. Here the level changes again to begin the section on early Christianity, intro-

* Which forms a worthy addition to those included in the Festival of Britain exhibitions review, A.R. September, 1951, pp. 191-202.

2

CANTERBURY THROUGH THE AGES

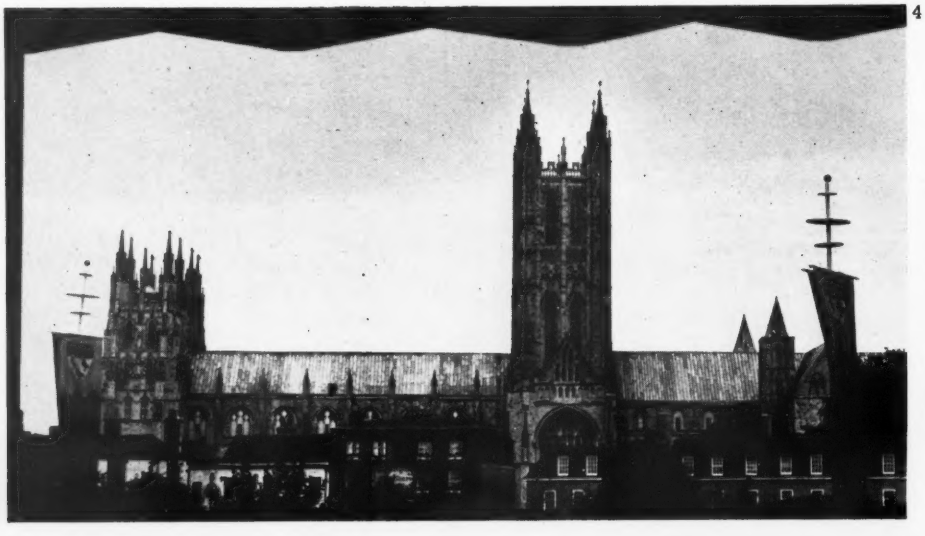


duced by a plain wooden cross and described in murals. The following courtyard is formed by the friary wall, flanked with the plaster figures of Knights and churchmen, and a slender wrought-iron screen. On the floor of cobbles and paved slabs is a central concrete block from which rises a great pair of hands. They hold a sword and a model of the Cathedral to symbolize the balance between Church and State, 2. The courtyard extends with the friary wall into a herbal garden, part of the monastic section, and on to a display of civic government. A flint-walled seat of grass turns the corner, and the broad path narrows to a lancet arch. Through this the view opens wide to include the farm section which is laid out informally, with open cow-sheds for refreshments, a gipsy caravan and a duck-pond fenced round with white paling in the rural tradition. A hop garden divides this from the underground air-raid display suggested by dim lights

3

and 'blown up' pictures of the blitz. It is followed by a photo-montage display of city rebuilding on an undulating, lateral panel edged in red against whitewashed bricks, 3. The release into the open is unexpected, for the exit steps are concealed by a wing wall. Here, in a small walled-in courtyard, is a model of the city as it will appear when rebuilt. A staircase, bordered with flowers and a honeycomb brick wall, leads to a platform where the Cathedral, framed as though it were one of the exhibits, 4, makes a striking, final impact. The exhibition was designed by the city architects, under L. Hugh Wilson, and by R. W. Paine, of the Canterbury College of Art.

Michael Farr



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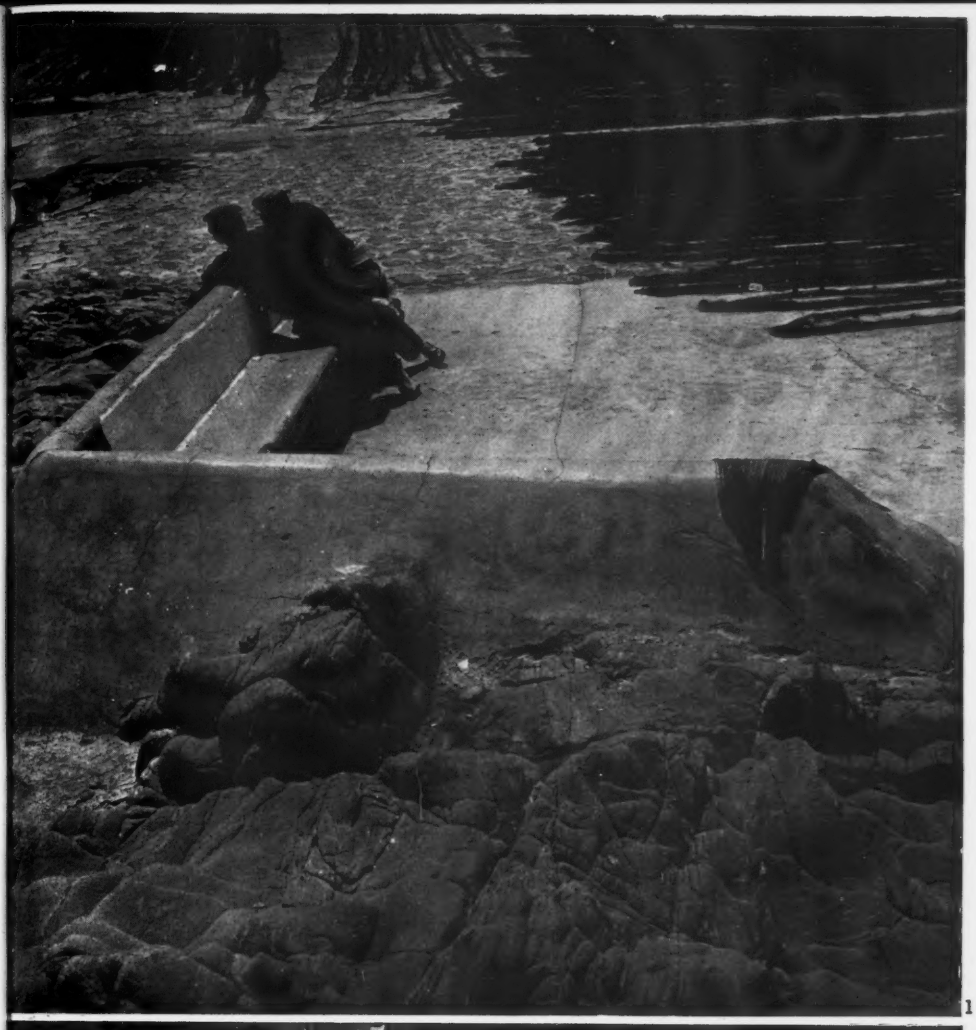
TRIM

TAMING WITH TACT

Half the art of landscape lies in the management of transitions. And no transition is more important, or more easily mismanaged, than the transition from wild to tame. There are two ways of managing this transition. One is by playing up the contrast between artifice and nature—by a frank display of force. This method has its place in the scheme of things, but it is emphatically not for general use. The second method is to consult the genius of the place and to soften the transition by such means as it may suggest; in other words, to tame with tact. Photographs 1 to 4 on the opposite page show examples of the use of this method. 1, 2 and 3 are all in the same place (St. Tropez) in the south of France. In 1 and 2 the transition from wild to tame is so smooth that you are scarcely aware of it at all—or put another way, nature is given the illusion of complete freedom and equality while being made to do exactly



1

3

what is required of her all the same. 3 is a little different: here the random masonry of the outer part of the quay forms, as it were, a gesture made by artifice to meet nature half-way. 4 (at Scarborough) shows

4

the transition from wilderness to concrete path at once defined and eased by a low wall of unhewn rocks. In 5, on the other hand, although there has obviously been some attempt to apply the principles of taming with tact, things have gone wrong; the chief offender is, of course, the tunnel mouth with the uncompromising line of

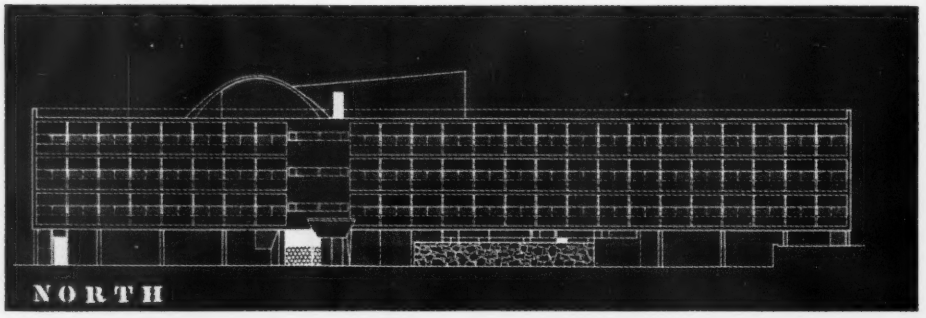
5

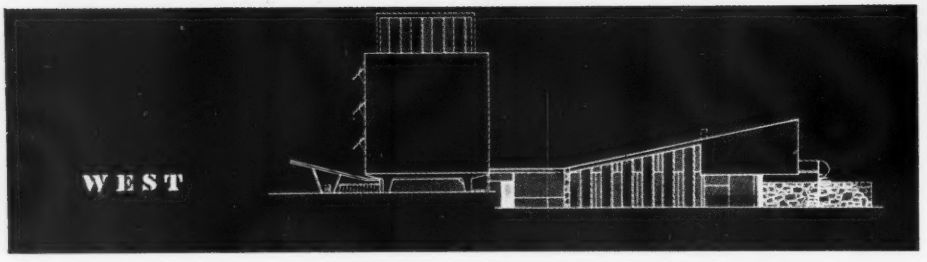
its parapet and the harsh stepping of its left side. This example (from North Wales) serves to underline the important truth that the art of taming with tact does not begin and end with the use of local materials.

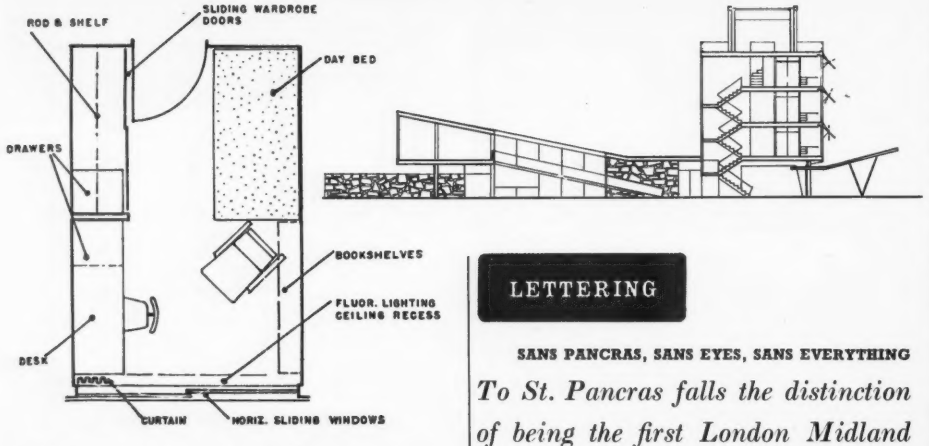
WORLD

AUSTRALIA

This students' hostel proposed for Sydney University, Australia, was designed by Harry Seidler*. It will house* 120 *students. The building is divided into two parts, the dormitory block and the communal rooms. The dormitory floors are raised from the ground for privacy, the ground floor being used for the main entrance hall and staircases. Services common to all occupants are also located on this floor. The remainder of the ground space serves as a covered garage and courtyard. Individual rooms (plan above) are 8 feet by 12 feet with built-in furniture. Common wash rooms are in the centre of each floor. A quiet recreation room, lecture room and library are on the roof, part of which is roofed with heat-resisting translucent plastic material. The cafeteria and common-rooms are approached through a connecting link from the dormitory block and also by ramp and an exterior staircase. Protection against the sun for the north elevation is provided by horizontal pivoted aluminium louvres, adjustable for each room. The structural frame is of reinforced concrete, except the three dormitory floors which, because of the small spans, are of load-bearing brick with concrete floors.







* Designer of the House near Sydney, A.R. September, 1951, page 150.

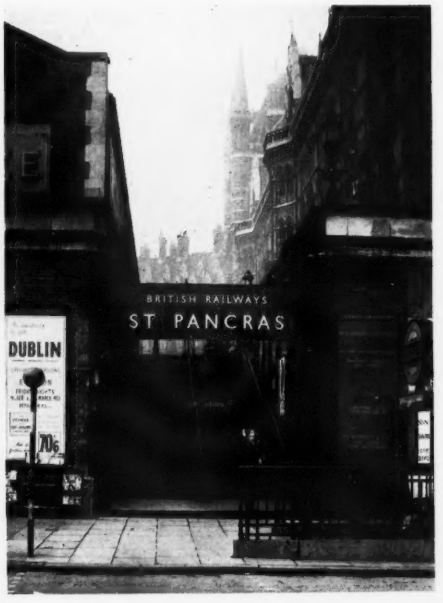
LETTERING

SANS PANCRAS, SANS EYES, SANS EVERYTHING

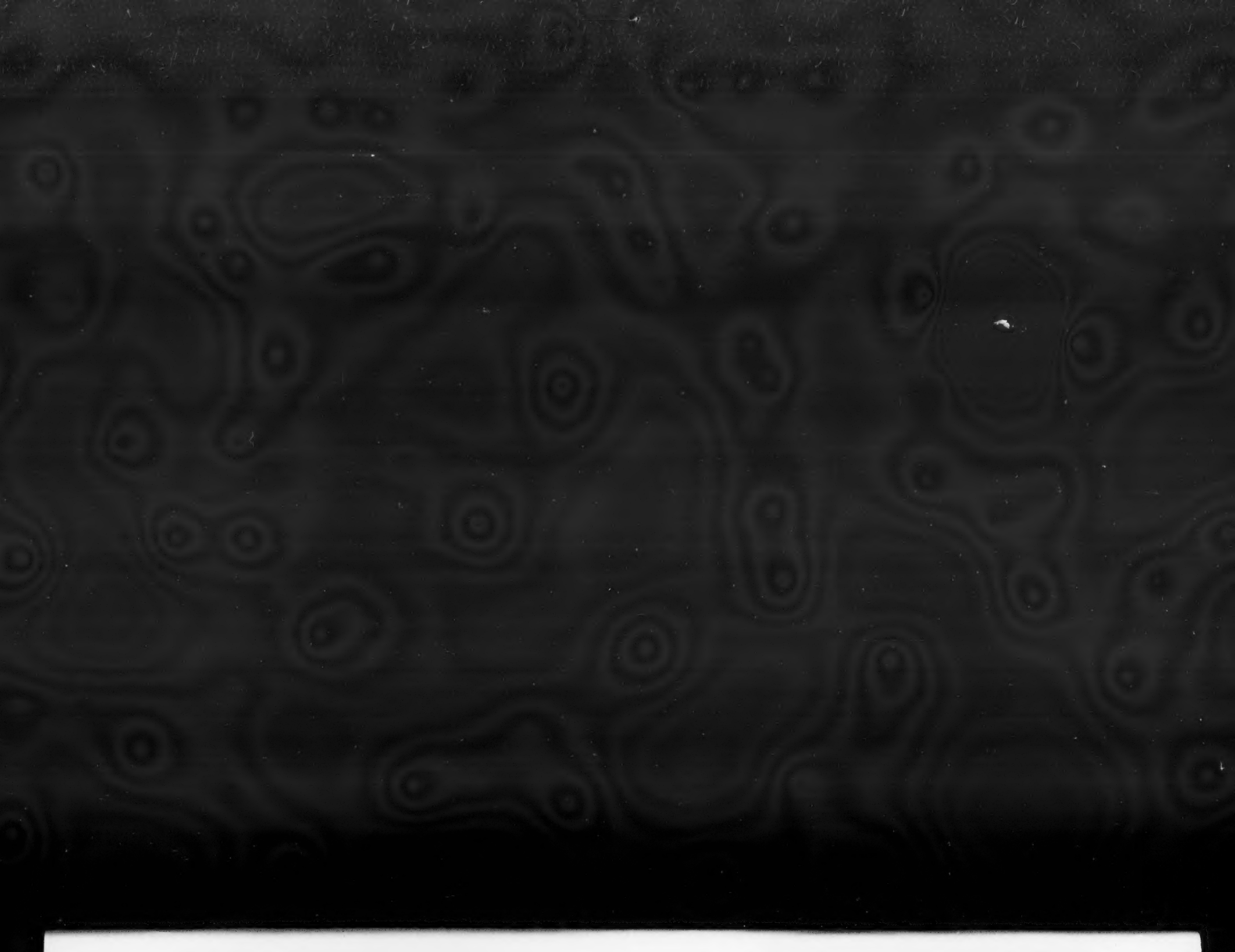
To St. Pancras falls the distinction of being the first London Midland station wholly to be provided with signs in accordance with British Railways principles. In other words: 'They're Standard; they're Swell; they're Sans!' The fallacy that sans serif is right for every occasion, regardless, has been acted on once again.

Regardless of how much, the accompanying photographs show. The first is of the entrance from Pancras Road 'before treatment,' as the handout puts it, the second of the same place 'after treatment.' It seems strange that anyone could prefer what is to what was. British Railways do, though; and they have principles—they say so themselves. Perhaps that's the trouble—principles. If you have principles, at least of a certain kind, you don't need eyes, you don't need to look; you know. You know that all the best people use sans;

that is what principles means here. For of course British Railways never looked, they can't have looked. If they had, they would surely have seen that the openwork iron sign they were so anxious to get rid of was put up by someone of sensibility, by someone with a sense of the potential drama in this particular combination of steps and walls and buildings: like a screen in a medieval cathedral, it was at once a veiling of the further mysteries and an invitation to approach them. The new sign no doubt ensures that he who runs



may read; was it really necessary to make it impossible for those with other uses for their eyes to do anything else? **R.M.**



BOOKS

INSIDE THE HOUSE

ENGLISH INTERIOR DECORATION. *By Margaret Jourdain. Batsford.* £3 3*s.* 0*d.*

Until a decade or so ago those wishing to study architecture were compelled to resort to massive folios in order to find the information they required. These great volumes were generally not only daunting in size, but also in matter; for, although they represented the fruits of much learning, the authors seldom made allowance for weakness or ignorance on the part of their readers. For this reason many a neophyte became permanently discouraged by the dryness of the material provided. This situation is now fortunately changing.

English Interior Decoration by Miss Margaret Jourdain is an example of the trend towards books of a handier size and of more general interest. It is based on four volumes published by Messrs. B. T. Batsford about thirty years ago, which covered the history of furniture and decoration from the early Renaissance to about 1800. The present volume deals only with decoration and craftsmanship from 1500 to 1830; while furniture will be dealt with separately in a future publication. The text is divided into five chapters, each treating chronologically a clearly defined architectural period, while the chapters are subdivided under convenient headings such as woodwork, plaster, interior features, and so forth. It is thus simple to find without delay the passage relating to any subject in which one may be interested, whether it be 'Decorative Painting and Colouring' during the Renaissance or the planning of staircases under the Palladians.

Miss Jourdain keeps closely to her theme and is not led away along any of the paths which extend so enticingly from the central subject of domestic architecture. Within these bounds the book makes agreeable reading, and information is imparted with clarity and a wealth of example. Few writers have a knowledge of architecture and the kindred arts at once so extensive and so accurate as Miss Jourdain, and she can inform as confidently on the construction of a Tudor screen as on the complicated process of making scagliola. Occasionally there are repetitive passages, which arise no doubt from the amalgamation of the texts of the earlier volumes.

The author's erudite writing is accompanied by over two hundred illustrations, six of which are in colour. Of the latter the merit is varying: the stained glass from Gilling and the 'wallpaper of Chinese type' are mellow and true in tone, but 'The Saloon at Blenheim,' which forms the frontispiece, is most unbecomingly suffused with *couleur de rose*. The photographic illustrations are a representative collection, to which Mr. A. F. Kersting has contributed over sixty admirable plates, the majority specially taken for this book. Those of Sudbury Hall, in Derbyshire, and Dodington Park, in Gloucestershire, are perhaps the most interesting, since neither of these great houses has been very widely illustrated in the past, and both emerge as unusually splendid examples of their different styles. A number of American interiors are also included, which show that, although eighteenth century work in the United States had a close affinity with contemporary decoration in this country, it bore a character unmistakably its own.

R. Dutton

LUXURY COMMUNISM

SWEDISH CO-OPERATIVE UNION AND WHOLESALE SOCIETY'S ARCHITECTS' OFFICE. *Part I, General work,* 1935-1949. *Part II Housing,* 1925-1949. (*Edited by Kooperativa Förbundets Arkitektkontor. Published by K.F. Bokförlag, Stockholm.* 18 *kr. per volume.*)

Most of us remember the book published in 1935 by the Architects' Office of the Swedish Co-operative Wholesale Society (*Kooperativa Förbundet* or *Konsum*) which illustrated the work of the first ten years of that body. It was exciting stuff in those days (especially the grain silos decorated with fir trees) and provided standards for the co-operative movement throughout the world. Now on KF's 50th anniversary its architects' office has published in English two large, well-produced picture books of its general work from 1935 to 1949 and its domestic work from 1925 to 1949. Part I deals with shops, restaurants, factories and general buildings, while Part II deals with housing and domestic furniture.

Considering the size of the country the volume of work accomplished is astonishing and amounts to some 300 million kronors' worth—say £18 millions. And this is the work of KF alone and does not include that of the other co-operative societies such as HSB.

The co-ops have been remarkably successful in Sweden, largely because the people possess a strong social conscience. The country is, in the egalitarian sense, more democratic than any other in the world and has been developing the welfare state steadily for over thirty years past. As a recent writer has said, Sweden is a country of luxury communism. KF itself has a membership of about 900,000 families, or more than a third of the whole population, which is served by over 7,000 retail shops, large and small. But apart from its shops it owns industries—a margarine factory, a rubber factory, an electric light bulb factory, iron works, flour mills. It is part owner of a new rayon textile works, and in 1937 acquired the old porcelain factory of Gustavsberg, where a model industrial village is now being rapidly developed. At Saltsjöbaden outside Stockholm it runs a college of its own. It possesses a publishing house which, among other things, produces a weekly review called *Vi* (We) with a circulation of 650,000. KF is clearly a great power in the land and its architecture forms an important part of new Swedish building.

Its architects' office has a staff of nearly 500 and is organized on the collective principle with a Chief Architect (Eskil Sundahl, boss from the start) controlling twelve other architects, each head of a section. There is also a special constructional and costing section with a civil engineer in charge. Each section functions as an independent unit carrying out its commissions quite on its own. At the same time the sections co-operate closely with each other in the exchange of information and ideas. The office as a whole is relatively autonomous within the movement for it is entirely self-supporting financially. Most of its work is, of course, carried out for the Co-operative Union and when it was first formed its sole object was the building of the co-op shops. But its scope has widened and now it also carries out commissions for individuals and organizations outside the Union—sometimes even for the State.

What is the quality of the work revealed in these two volumes, what does it express and how does that in Part I compare with the work of the first ten years from 1925 to 1935?

There has been curiously little change in style and the general impression is one of clean, solid, earnest, worthy, practical, austere utilitarianism. One feels that everyone has done his best, driven by a relentless Lutheran conscience, to make life orderly, hygienic, efficient and tidy for everybody—including those who dislike being organized. It is all of sound craftsmanship carried out in excellent taste, and many of the buildings, especially the small country shops, have elegance. But it is all quite impersonal and lacks either fantasy or humour. It is so *ordentligt* that one wonders how long it will be before some of its more individualistic creators will snap under the strain of this neurotic sanity and reel off to carouse with the trolls in the deep, wild forest whose verge is, after all, never far away.

Thereby as a symbol the KF architecture poses a problem of great importance for the world—a problem of which the Swedes themselves are aware. The problem is this: Having attained a desirable, practical society in which all are well fed, well clothed and well housed (though to be sure even in Sweden the living space is still cramped); having also attained all the civic amenities, where do you go then? The welfare state has been consolidated, but still people are not happy. A kind of boredom is produced and there remains, to use a favourite Swedish word, a *längtan*—a longing. But for what? One gropes for the answer.

Several random observations of life in Sweden to-day may act as pointers: (i) Education is good, but highly standardized and the initiation puberty rite of the Student Exam. seems to be a repressed form of sadism. (ii) The eccentric character in Sweden is very rare indeed. (iii) In Stockholm bands of standardized youths with round cheeks, immaculate mackintoshes and American hats have been reported to wander through the streets in their leisure time just breaking things up. (iv) Visitors to Sweden sense behind the polite, well-ordered provincial life a tense atmosphere of melancholy, and conversely Swedish visitors to England have experienced a great sense of relief here from this tension; they feel happier here after the first shock produced by our dirt, squalor, slackness and appalling food. (v) In spite of physical hedonism and a fair amount of sexual promiscuity, a deep, unquestioned puritanism hangs heavily in the clean, sparkling air—of a kind which finds exact formal expression in the buildings of the KF.

The Swedes are a kindly race and in many ways are the most civilized people in the world. But they burden themselves too heavily with an obsessional belief in perfection. The individual is given too little scope in which to exercise his personal foibles. Too much is expected of him from too early an age, especially in conformity of behaviour, and this acts against his deep sense of individualism fostered through generations in the ancient family smallholding. The tenseness of the Swedes may thus be the result of an ambivalent attitude towards the respective values of the community and the individual. The Swedish psychological conflict is becoming a world conflict, and thus what the KF buildings express is of the greatest significance. The basic question faces all of us: Is the Individual more important than the State?

Modern building is a matter of co-operation. Modern architecture, like all design, must be the result of intensely personal expression if it is not to become boring and, therefore, in the end not architecture at all but merely utility building. The conflict can be resolved if we seek a condition, to use a well-known couplet of Pope's on Windsor Park—

Where order in variety we see
And where, though all things differ, all agree.

Eric de Maré

EXHIBITIONS, YESTERDAY AND TODAY

THE STORY OF EXHIBITIONS. *By Kenneth W. Luckhurst. The Studio Ltd. 30s. net.*

'Whither Exhibitions?' asks Mr. Luckhurst in the final chapter of this admirable survey. Let no one think, even in this year of 'fêtes accomplis,' that the answer will be nothing but a weary groan. The question is rhetorical. The author is a man of experience and knows the answer. 'The eye,' he writes, 'is not satisfied with seeing, nor is the ear filled with hearing. Of exhibitions, as of books, there will be no end.' And of course he is right.

The one-man show in Bond Street, the mammoth trade fair, the village flower show and the international exhibition can still compete successfully for the public attention on their own ground, and even to-day in the autumn of 1951, the very word exhibition will bring the British public gamely and hopefully once more to its feet. And rightly so. In its short but fascinating and productive history the exhibition —laboratory for architect and designer, competitive mart for manufacturers, bazaar and playground for the public—has given pleasure, opportunity and profit, financial and otherwise, to many millions.

The author begins his survey with the first art exhibition (organized in 1760 by Francis Hayman and some enterprising fellow artists), and ends it with the Festival of Britain. As secretary of the Royal Society of Arts, Mr. Luckhurst is justly proud of the pioneering part played by his society throughout the whole of this romantic story, and like all good secretaries he is adept at picking his way over the battlefields where lately the Personalities clashed and the crowds trampled, and at rescuing from the dust and confusion those shreds of information which are valuable and relevant. Tidily, patiently he notes them down, verifies their accuracy, and supplements the result with comparative statistics and an index. Year by year the Great Parade goes by. Year by year the figures mount and the adjectives of wonder multiply. 1851, 18 acres under glass: 1871, Vienna and a dome 320 ft. across: 1889, the Eiffel Tower and 30 million visitors: 1904, St. Louis and 45 miles of footway: 1939, New York—1,200 acres and 5 million dollars deficit: 1951, a whole nation and its people on show to the world. Endlessly the search for size and novelty persists. As long ago as 1867 M. Le Play foresaw that unless the mad chase was halted, exhibitions would grow more and more troublesome as their size increased—yet as recently as 1947 the Ramsden Committee recommended that the 1951 celebrations should surpass in every respect the New York World Fair.

But though Mr. Luckhurst writes of showmen—how profoundly true his comment that no exhibition is entirely without trace of self-display—he does not write as a showman. His manner is quiet, colloquial and dry, the facts packed too tightly for easy reading. But if to some of us his treatment is pitched in a lower and more muted key than the drama of his subject would seem to deserve, let us be thankful he has avoided the alternative temptation of facetiousness—those easy and tedious jokes about the naiveté of our grandparents—and the technicolour prose of the professional describer — the 'let-us-try-and-picture-the-scene-on-that-fine-May-morning' stuff.

Architects will find the chapter on buildings thin in scope and familiar in content, and something of a chance has been missed with the illustrations, which are not, I think, so fascinating as they might have been. I should have liked also to learn more about some of those famous exhibition personalities—Henry Cole, J. R. Whitley, Imri Kiralfy and their private battles. But these are not recorded presumably in the minute books and Mr. Luckhurst keeps firmly to the path of fact. Inevitably therefore his story is incomplete. For I suspect that the magic of exhibitions, both for organizer and public, lies less in the bombardment of 'biggest-ever' statistics than in more subtle fascinations—for the organizers the agonies and conflicts of creative endeavour always pursued at breakneck speed, and for the public the anticipation of delights being secretly prepared, the gambler's interest in the race for time, and then for both, the drama of the opening day and (if all goes well) that intoxicating raffish perfume which is the smell of success.

It is unreasonable, however, to grumble at Mr. Luckhurst because he has given us more fact than fancy. He has given us a detailed record set out in a form long needed by students and historians, and we can leave it to others to embroider upon its sober pattern the roses and sequins which are what the eye remembers.

Hugh Casson

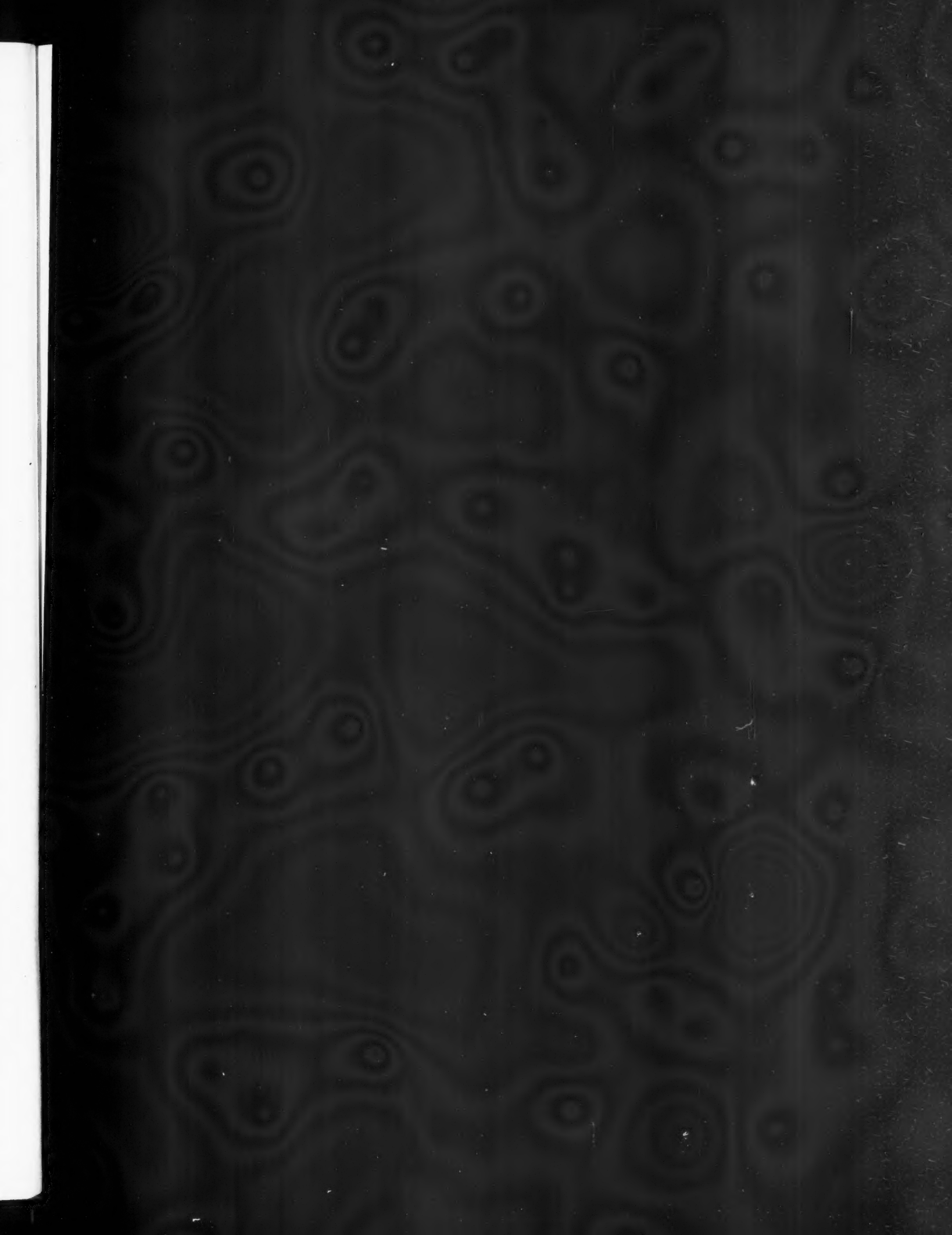
Shorter Notices

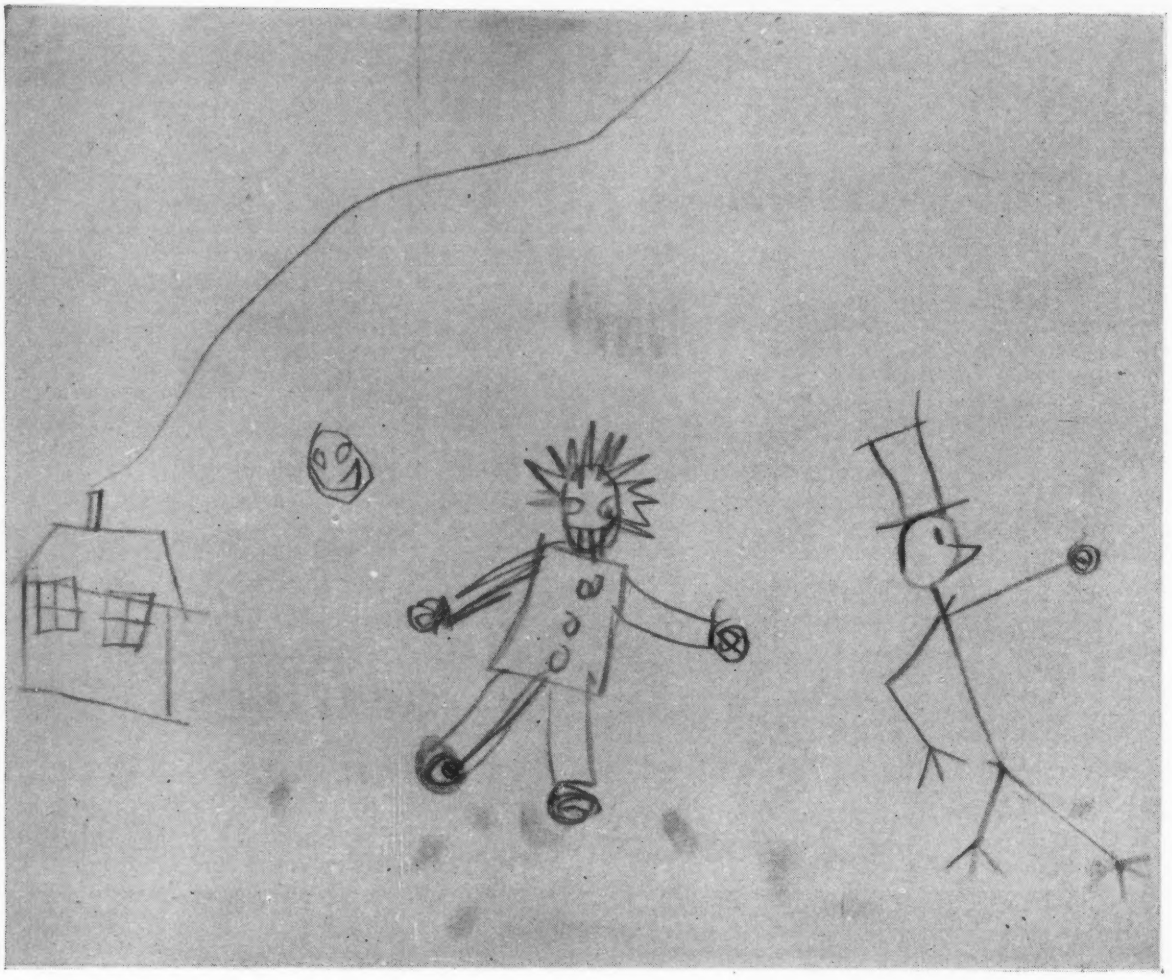
ROYAL PAVILION: A STUDY IN THE ROMANTIC. *By Clifford Musgrave. Bredon and Heginbothom Ltd. 15s.*

The contribution of the Prince Regent to architecture goes a good deal further than providing a name for one of the outstanding periods of English design. It began, indeed, long before the Regency came into being, and became evident almost as soon as the attainment of his majority enabled him to put the rebuilding of Carlton House into the hands of Henry Holland. This was soon followed by another architectural venture when the Prince took over and began the alteration of Mr. Kemp's farmhouse at Brighton. Both were to become expressions of the Prince's personal interest in architecture, and particularly in oriental design as first reflected in the Chinese drawing-rooms introduced alongside Holland's classical decoration. Within the palatial and sophisticated atmosphere of Carlton House his fancies were limited to these mild excursions into Chinoiserie, but at Brighton the spell of China took a stronger hold and soon imposed itself in the decoration of all the principal rooms, only to be superseded when the Prince became a convert to the fascinations of India. The 'Moslem' stables and riding house which Porden built for him in 1803 would now seem to be the earliest buildings of consequence in England resulting from the new source of inspiration introduced by Thomas Daniell's 'Views of Oriental Scenery.' They were completed nearly two years before Samuel Pepys Cockerell's masterpiece at Sezincote, and set the key for drastic changes at the Pavilion itself. These various transformations of his marine villa provided the Prince with a source of interest for nearly thirty-five years, and a study of them forms the subject of Mr. Musgrave's delightful book. As Director of the Royal Pavilion Estate he has had unique opportunities for research, and the result leaves the reader with an increased admiration for the Prince's artistic attributes, as well as sympathy for the succession of brilliant architects who were called on to serve their exacting and distracting royal client. **D.S.**

VIEWS OF HARVARD. *By Hamilton Vaughan Bail. Harvard University Press. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege. 80s.*

A *catalogue raisonné* of views of the Harvard University buildings put up before 1860 drawn up with great care in 250 pages of text. The sixty-six plates are all concerned with pre-1860 illustrations, including photographs of Gore Hall and Appleton Chapel, which have both disappeared. Gore Hall was Gothic, rather of the Commissioners' brand, and dated from 1838-40. Appleton Chapel was vaguely Italian Romanesque and dated from 1858. Nearly all the other buildings are still in existence, though none of them on the scale of contemporary Oxford or Cambridge architecture, and none of them conceived together as unified compositions. The oldest of all, Massachusetts Hall of 1720, set the pattern with its hooded porches and gambrel roof. Of a more representational Georgian style is Harvard Hall of 1766 with pediment and cupola (much altered) and Hollis Hall of 1763 and, almost identical, Stoughton Hall of 1803-5. The leading Boston architect, Bullfinch, appeared on the scene with University Hall (1813-15). After that date not much was added, and the most important nineteenth century structures of Harvard, Memorial Hall in Victorian Gothic, and Sever Hall, one of Richardson's most impressive designs, lie beyond the space of time with which the book deals. **N.P.**





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ANTHOLOGY

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If you be not either so much an architect as can designe, and order in your owne building, or have one, upon whose judgement and discretion you may rely, and moreover have him continually at hand, to give his directions, its better not to medle in any degree beyond small alterations for Convenience. For none can imagine, how many minute things will emerg in the doing a bussness of this nature unforseen or thought of in ye designe. And workmen are so pervers, that of two ways, much more 3, 4 or 5, they will take ye wrong. And for this reason, I cannot reccomend to any one the undertaking great alterations and additions to an hous, unless he be a designer in some measure, and can lay before his workmen, his plotts and designes, and moreover be at hand to direct, as well as to oversee, that no absurdity's is thurst in in ye Execution, and many will obtrud upon ye best. For a profest architect is proud, opiniative and troublesome, seldome at hand, and a head workman pretending to ye designing part, is full of paultry vulgar contrivances, therefore be your owne architect, or sitt still.

ROGER NORTH* (*'of Building'*) BM add. MS 32,540, circa 1700.

* See article on this architect on page 257.

MARGINALIA

Restoration . . .

Lack of space due to the special requirements of Festival year has hitherto prevented mention in Marginalia of an event which all readers of the REVIEW will be glad to hear of—the restoration and re-opening of York Assembly Rooms. Built in 1730–32, York Assembly Rooms were designed by Lord Burlington, his plans and elevations being based on Palladio's interpretation of a celebrated passage in Vitruvius describing what he calls an Egyptian Hall. During the eighteenth century the building was, of course, enormously admired; Woolfe and Gandon, for instance, wrote that 'for elegance and convenience it is not surpassed by anything in the kingdom,' and expressed the opinion that it would be 'a lasting monument to his Lordship's taste in architecture.' During the nineteenth century its stock declined, and so in the twentieth did its status; during the war it became a Food Office. The restoration was carried out under the direction of Arthur Boys at a cost of £30,000. The photograph on this page shows the main room as restored; the chandeliers were made in Venice, it is believed at the same factory as made the originals two hundred and twenty years ago. (Photographs taken before the restoration, including details, will be found in the REVIEW for July, 1945, illustrating *Lord Burlington in Yorkshire*, by James Lees-Milne.)

. . . and Destruction

While York is to be congratulated on having got back its Assembly Rooms, Wisbech must be commiserated on the impending destruction (which seems almost certain) of its Octagon Chapel. Built in 1826 to the design of a certain William Swansborough, who took the Ely lantern as his model, this church is not only of considerable intrinsic interest on account of its plan but serves as a valuable Gothic foil to the classical Georgian which predominates in Wisbech. In 1946 it ceased to be used as a place of worship, and in September, 1947, a Commission of Inquiry recommended that the benefice be united with St. Peter's and the building demolished. All attempts to find an alternative use for the building—attempts in which the Wisbech Society played the leading role—having hitherto come to nothing, and the scheme for the union of the benefices under which the Church Commissioners may demolish it having been approved by the Privy Council, it appears as if nothing short of a miracle can now save the Octagon.

The Coventry Competition

It is a pity that the 219 designs submitted in the Coventry Cathedral competition were not exhibited where all could see them. They were on view for a week at Coventry, and the five prize-winning and highly commended designs have since been shown at the Building Centre in London. But the designs that failed to win a prize were even more instructive, especially for the cross-section they provided of the ideas about religious architecture held by British architects at the turn of the century—ideas, it should be said, of such a strangely assorted nature as to bear out the often expressed view that a civilization in which religious faith plays so relatively small a part as it does in our own cannot hope to build satisfactory cathedrals.

The modern architectural idiom, fast growing to maturity though it is, can hardly yet achieve the difficult task, depending on association as much as æsthetics, of creating a religious atmosphere without too self-conscious an effort, nor for the reason just given is it likely to do so in the near future. Lacking a contemporary idiom with the necessary resources, most Coventry competitors fell back on stunts of various kinds or on adaptations of historic styles in various accepted modes. There seemed to be no examples of really scholarly period design, nor even any as near to the Gothic spirit as, say, the early work of Sir Giles Scott. As was to be expected, there were a number of entries in the neo-Gothic manner of Mr. Edward Maufe, who was one of the assessors. Among influences from abroad the two most noticeable were the several austerely geometrical churches (like those of Karl Moser) put up in Switzerland and Scandinavia in the 'thirties, the work of Auguste Perret no doubt due to the fact that his reinforced concrete church at Le Rainey, 1927, is the one non-traditional church building that has been widely accepted and approved) and—strangely—the work of the essentially pagan Frank Lloyd Wright.

The standard of design was, taken as a whole, extremely disappointing, and there can be little doubt that, in giving the first prize to Mr. Basil Spence, the three assessors (Sir Percy Thomas, Mr. Howard Robertson and Mr. Maufe) chose the most imaginatively planned and the most vigorously worked out. The chief weakness of Mr. Spence's design is its uncertainty of structural character, arising from its mixed modern and traditional construction—shell concrete for the roof; solid, weight-bearing stone for the walls—which has given it a somewhat lumpish look, with too many apparently arbitrarily selected shapes and outlines. Much

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1, *the York Assembly Rooms recently restored and reopened, and* 2, *the Octagon Chapel, Wisbech, recommended for demolition.* (*See* Restoration . . . and Destruction.)

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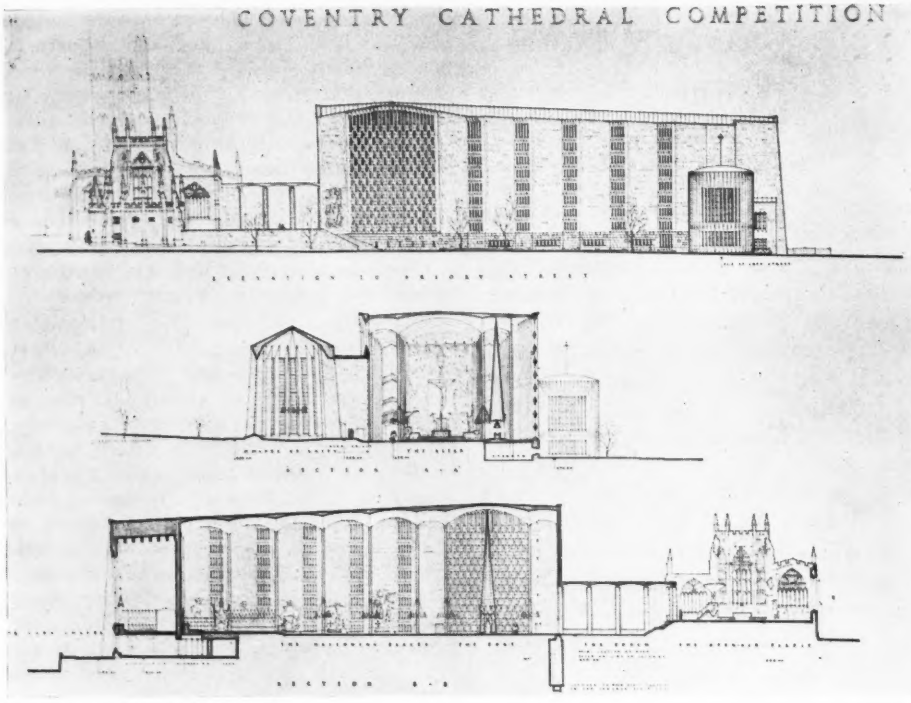

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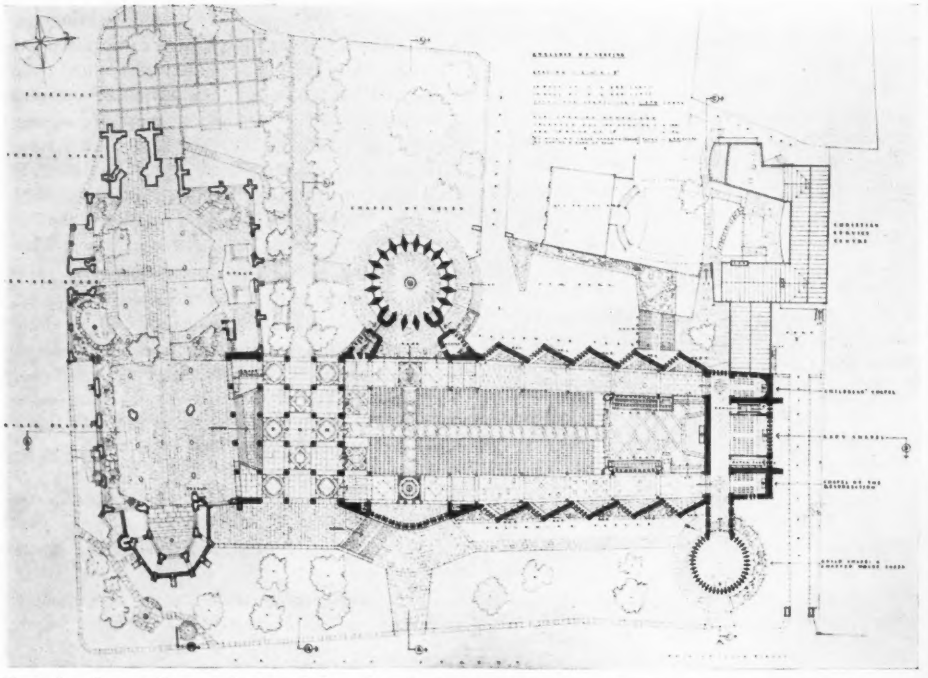

East elevation, sections and plan of the prize-winning design by Basil Spence for Coventry Cathedral.

of the architecture, that is to say, does not seem to spring naturally from the demands of the structure; on the other hand, it does endeavour to be functional in a rather different sense, offering the cathedral's future congregation a kind of spatial symbolism to make up for the inevitable absence of fundamental religious feeling.

The second prize-winner, Mr. W. P. Hunt, produced a sensitively planned building with sadly insipid elevations and the third prize-winner, Maj. A. D. Kirby, a competent but thoroughly commonplace exercise in neo-Gothic. It is perhaps symptomatic of the times that more competitors were successful in their treatment of the ruins of the old cathedral than in designing the new one. When Mr. Spence's is finished, Coventry will at least have a fascinating memorial to the difficulties and varying allegiances of twentieth century architecture, since it is a building that does attempt to speak with the voice of its own epoch. On this the assessors as well as the architect are to be congratulated.

Mr. Spence has been brave enough to allow plenty of scope for the other arts in the shape of sculpture, tapestries, metal-work and stained glass. It is hoped that when the time for the selection of artists arises, the architect will be given his proper place as leader of a team of his own choice. Too many church interiors are spoilt by the work of inferior artists, imposed on the building by often munificent, but generally tasteless, individuals and committees.

RCA Summer Exhibition

The Royal College of Art Summer Exhibition provided tangible evidence of the state of progress reached since the reorganization of the Design School at the College in 1948. In that year Robin Darwin took over as Principal and appointed seven *ad hoc* committees of manufacturers and designers. On their suggestions six separate schools were started for industrial design training. In scope they cover textiles, silversmithing, jewellery, glass, ceramics, graphic design, fashion and work in wood, metals and plastics. Practising designers were appointed as professors, specialized teachers were obtained and each school equipped with up-to-date workshop and factory equipment. While the original College qualification, ARCA, was reserved for fine art students, a new diploma, DesRCA, was introduced for student designers. To obtain it students have to complete one of the design courses and spend nine months at work in industry.

In the recent exhibition, most of the work set a high standard of design for industry. One problem for students in the School of Wood, Metals and Plastics, was to design nutcrackers which were functionally efficient and also presentable as table ware. The set illustrated here was designed and made in wood and mild steel by R. C. Heritage. The spring, with a smaller spring wrapped round, helps to crack the nut and then open the handles. It is suitable for mass-production; the steel arms could be die-cast. The stacking chairs for school children are by V. A. Hindley. The frame is of solid beech and the back and seat of curved plywood are secured by wooden dowls with counter-

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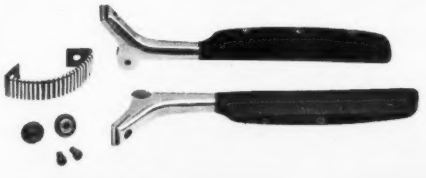

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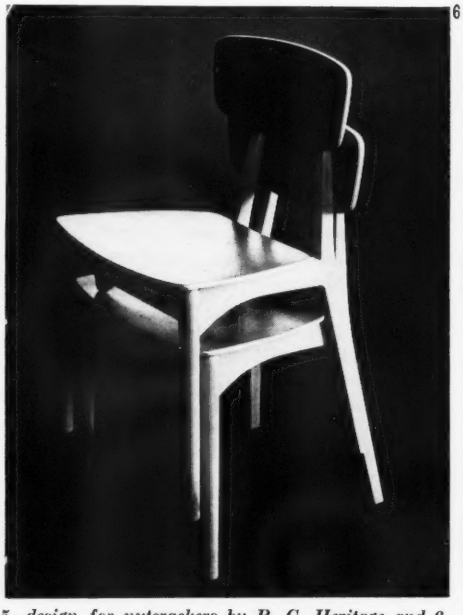

5, design for nutcrackers by R. C. Heritage and 6, *stacking chairs for school children by V. A. Hindley from the recent exhibition of students' work at the Royal College of Art.*

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The roof of Hatfield Technical College is insulated with 'Fibreglass' quilt

Photograph illustrates the application of 'Fibreglass' quilt *under* the concrete roof slabs.

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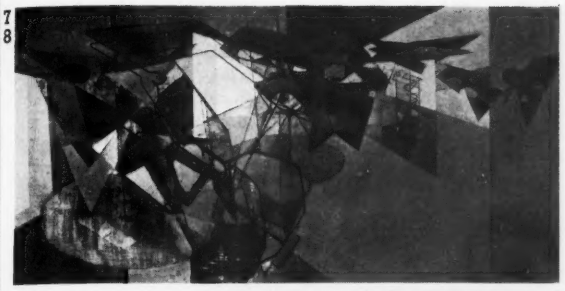

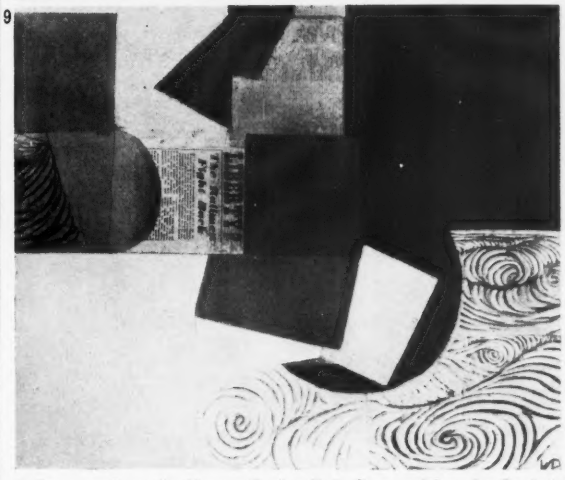

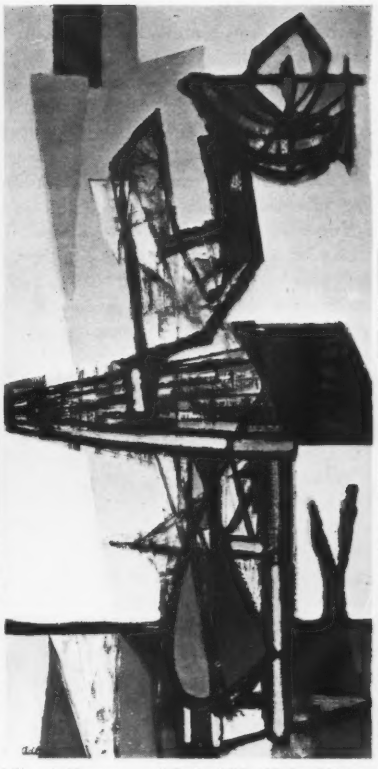

7, Conservatory, *by George Tuckwell*, 8, Composition, *by Jankel Adler*, 9, Square and Spiral Motif, *by Victor Pasmore, from the British Abstract Art Exhibition at the Gimpel Fils Gallery.*

sunk 'screw' heads; a device used more in Denmark than in this country. Again, these chairs could be mass-produced with little difficulty.

The Painting of Brighton Pavilion

The exterior of the Royal Pavilion, Brighton, is to be painted what is called 'Regency cream'—domes and all. This is the dismal outcome of a controversy which has engaged those concerned with the care of the building since the beginning of the year.

When the question of the repainting of the Pavilion was first raised, the Director, Mr. Clifford Musgrave (whose new book on the building is reviewed on page 270) realized that this was no case for stock solutions and had a number of coloured bands painted on one wall in an attempt to select the best combination. The Pavilion authorities, however, presumably afraid of public opinion, called in Mr. J. L. Denman as consultant. Mr. Denman pointed out that the exterior was originally painted in imitation of Bath stone throughout, and for a time it was understood that Bath stone would be used in the repainting. The final choice of 'Regency cream' has neither the timid virtue of archæological correctness nor—what is more important—æsthetic merit to commend it: it can only be based on the mistaken belief that cream is always 'safe'—a belief so generally held in England that any foreigner might suppose that we were the victims of a paint-makers' conspiracy to supply nothing else. The combination of colours used in the last repainting, in 1935, was infinitely preferable, while the pale copper green of the principal domes could not be improved upon.

Catalogues of Woe

The existence of a typographical panel set up in connection with the Festival of Britain and the good work it did in producing the specimen of display letters (see comments and illustrations in AR Marginalia, March, 1951) make it hard to understand why the designers of the FOB leaflets and catalogues were denied the benefit of the Panel's advice. Most of the printed publicity of the Festival of Britain is distinguished only by its repellent vulgarity. (Few designs produced in England since the war have been quite as offensive as the leaflets and folders advertising the Pleasure Gardens at Battersea Park.) But in a few pieces—such as the South Bank plan folder, for example—vulgarity has been replaced by an inappropriately dreary and humdrum kind of design that somehow achieves a uniform monochrome greyness despite the use of three- and four-colour printings.

It is interesting, but disturbing, to compare these miserable and unfortunate designs with the exciting literature produced for the Milan Triennale—and it is embarrassing to realize that the literature of the Festival and of the Triennale appears together in many Continental travel agencies.

The design of the catalogues and guides, though considerably less offensive in appearance, is equally ill-conceived. By attempting to impose what is fundamentally the centred layout of the traditional book page, the designer of the Festival catalogues, Will Carter, created for himself innumerable problems; that these problems have not been satisfactorily overcome will have been apparent to anyone who has tried to use, for example, the ten shilling South Bank catalogue. It is the primary function of a catalogue to inform, quickly and easily, and *immediate* reference to any entry should be possible. Mr. Carter would have been wiser to have allowed the form of presentation to be determined by his complicated material. Too many capitals and italics, inconsistent and excessive punctuation, the use nearly everywhere of a size of type quite unrelated to the length of line, and the 'squaring-up' of lines (unnecessary in printing of this kind) have also helped to make these catalogues inefficient and difficult to use.

EXHIBITIONS

The great charm of the Growth and Form exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts was that the eye might enjoy itself without having to call in the intellect to help it make qualitative judgments, as it must when the critic or conscientious gallery-goer is confronted

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11

10 *and* 11, *two photographs of the* Growth and Form *Exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts.*

by a room full of works of human art. But the ICA wasn't going to let us have a complete holiday, even in August, and produced, in collaboration with Lund Humphries and Co., a volume called *Aspects of Form*[1] of which no one could say that it makes no demands on the intellect. This 'symposium on form in nature and art,' as its subtitle describes it, was originally conceived as a catalogue to the exhibition but

12

Bedroom dog fireplace in the shape of an airedale from 'Black Eyes and Lemonade,' an exhibition of popular art at the Whitechapel Gallery.

outgrew this function. The editor is Lancelot Law Whyte and the contributors are ten scientists and one historian and critic of art, E. H. Gombrich. Professor Gombrich's essay, 'Meditations on a Hobby Horse or the Roots of Artistic Form,' seemed to at least one reader quite extraordinarily stimulating. In place of the 'conceptual' theory of primitive art, which holds that the primitive artist (or the child) *portrays* an object by representing those features which he knows it to possess, Professor Gombrich advances a 'functional' theory, according to which the purpose of artistic activity at the most primitive layer is not portrayal but the *creation of substitutes* out of given material, and the features represented are those necessary for the substitute to perform the function required of it by its creator. As developed by Professor Gombrich, not without wit, this theory certainly avoids the difficulties and contradictions which assail any attempt to apply the conceptual theory to the facts as archæology and the observation of children present them to us.

Oddly enough, there is no hobby horse to meditate on in the Whitechapel Art Gallery, although there is a vaulting horse, together with several other examples of substitute equinity. 'Black Eyes and Lemonade'—'A Persian's heaven is easily made, 'Tis but—black eyes and lemonade,' wrote Thomas Moore—was arranged by the Gallery in association with the Arts Council and the Society for Education in Art; to observe that it is essentially an exhibition for those who already boast some education in that direction is not to imply that we educated ones should be any less grateful to the Gallery and the Council and the Society, and Barbara Jones[2] and Tom Ingram for the astonishing display of often astonishing objects which they have assembled for our delight. It is a pity, however, that Miss Jones in the introduction to the catalogue missed the opportunity of pointing out what must strike everyone as the most obvious lesson of the exhibition—that the Victorians really had got something, when it came to popular art, which has been lost today or only survives when Victorian designs are more or less exactly repeated. It is no good pretending that another quarter of a century will see us all admiring jazz-modern, as Miss Jones seems to imply; it won't.

What had the Victorians got when it came to High Art? What they wanted, as Geoffrey Grigson reminds us in the catalogue of 'Ten Decades of British Taste,' organized by the ICA under the auspices of the Arts Council at the RBA Gallery,[3] was not so much Beauty—at least from the fifties on—as Ideal Aesthetic Pleasure. There is plenty of æsthetic pleasure (whether ideal or not) to be had in this well chosen exhibition, both in the Victorian rooms and the later ones. There is also pleasure of another kind to be had from the quotations from contemporary criticism of the painters and paintings which enliven the catalogue. (Rather surprisingly, the compiler failed to draw on the writings on art of George Moore.)

At Gimpel Fils there has been the most comprehensive exhibition of British abstract art yet put on, with forty-nine painters and thirteen sculptors represented—necessarily by no more than one or two works each. Anyone who went to this exhibition expecting that a proportion of the paintings would be of the school of Nicholson and a proportion of the sculptures of the school of Hepworth must have quickly realized that he was behind the times: there is already a school of (abstract) Pasmore. The best paintings, apart from those of Nicholson and Pasmore themselves, and one by Hepworth, were by Jankel Adler, William Gear, Peter Lanyon, and—a name new to these pages—George Tuckwell. Among the sculptures there were characteristic works by Adams, Chadwick, Hepworth, Paolozzi, and Turnbull.

[1] 21s.

[2] Author of articles on the subject in the REVIEW, which form the basis of a book just published: *The Unsophisticated Arts* (Architectural Press, 25s.).

[3] A selection of paintings from this exhibition will be reproduced next month.

CORRESPONDENCE

Unity of Thought

To the Editors,

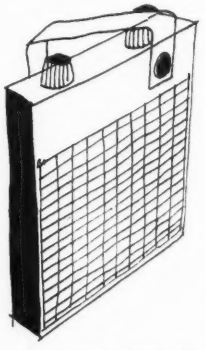
THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

DEAR SIRS,—This is acknowledged as a period of transition, a period when new æsthetic principles, or rather fresh applications of age-old relations, are evolving and developing. A new mode of expression which is already becoming dogmatic in its basic elements is being developed, expressive of the age which gives it birth. That the basic forms of the new expression are indeed the reflection of a new approach to three-dimensional design which is rooted in this age, and are not merely individual mannerisms, is strangely exemplified in that branch of scientific industrial design which has entered the intimate life of the home, that of the radio cabinet.

The decision to acknowledge the radio as a scientific instrument, which when brought into the home requires a type of treatment in keeping with its working requirements rather than one which attempts to disguise it, has long been taken.

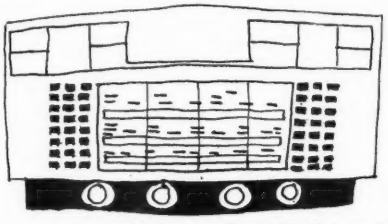
After several experiments in 'content articulation,' the complex organism has resolved itself into one basic form—that of the cube, upon whose face the three elements of speaker grille, tuning screen, and controls are dispersed. These serve to give the inert form 'direction,' as a window enlivens a closed spatial unit.

Thus the problem of the cabinet designer resolves itself into the treatment of a 'directional' box whose proportions are initially determined by its complex contents and whose ultimate shape is, to a limited degree, influenced by the material employed.

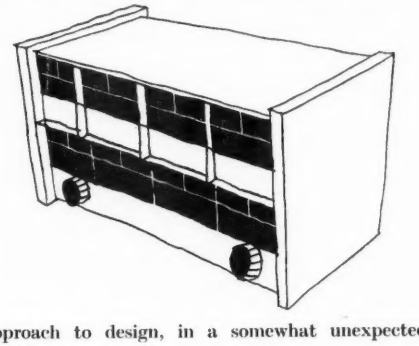


Otherwise he is free to define his mass how he chooses; an abstraction truly contemporary in its implication.

Comparing the solutions arrived at by the radio industry with the methods of single-mass articula-

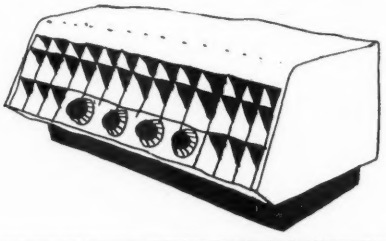


tion current in architecture, the similarity needs no emphasis. Here lies one proof of the unity of



approach to design, in a somewhat unexpected field.*

Further parallels may be found between the



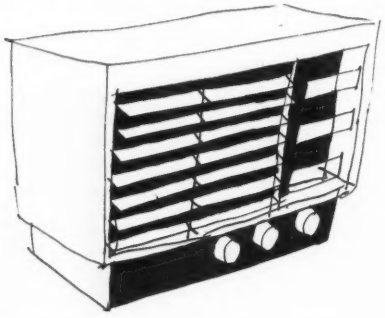
* Gordon Cullen here illustrates the suggestion made by Mr. Blee that there is affinity between design solutions of radio cabinets and some recent contemporary architecture.

[continued on page 276

continued from page 274]

treatments of speaker grilles—'brise de soleil' come readily to mind—and their relationships with the cabinet. These are the 'aural' windows of the radio.

One would not be surprised to find Saul Steinberg



selecting one of these sets and placing it within the urban scene, as he did (in last December's issue of the REVIEW) with a sideboard or a chest of drawers. A heartening emphasis on unity of thought would result.

Yours, etc.,

Hove. MICHAEL J. BLEE.

A New Eclecticism?

The Editors,

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

DEAR SIRS,—I should like to say how stimulating I found Mr. Robin Boyd's article in your September issue. Though I am, by nature, organic, he has opened up new vistas for me; who knows, but granted 'a change of mood' I may yet live to be 'Mies for a day.'

The Australian houses were both admirable. Could your readers not see more of them than the two photographs you published as a frontispiece?

Yours, etc.,

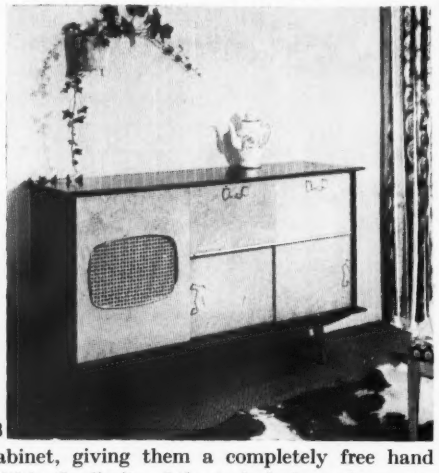
London. B. PILLESBY-STICKETT.

The houses will be further described and illustrated, with plans, in November.—THE EDITORS.

TRADE & INDUSTRY

Philco 'Richmond' Radiogram

Last year the firm of Philco invited Geoffrey Dunn and Maurice Russell to design a radiogram



13

cabinet, giving them a completely free hand within the limits of the technical requirements. The result, illustrated in 13, has been chosen for the Festival of Britain Exhibition.

The cabinet is carried out in mahogany with

14

13 and 14, the Philco 'Richmond' radiogram designed by Geoffrey Dunn and Maurice Russell shown at the South Bank Exhibition.

bird's-eye maple panels; the handles, ferrules on the legs and the bevel to the loudspeaker opening are of hand-made satin-finished brass. The loudspeaker grille is in hand-woven split cane. The upper centre panel is a drop-front, 14, giving access to the tuning dial, radio and gramophone controls. The upper right-hand panel is a smoothly-running pull-out drawer on roller bearings housing the automatic record changer. The two lower panels are sliding doors covering the record storage cupboards, giving accommodation for upwards of 300 records.

The technical equipment consists of a nine-valve radiogramophone combining all-wave

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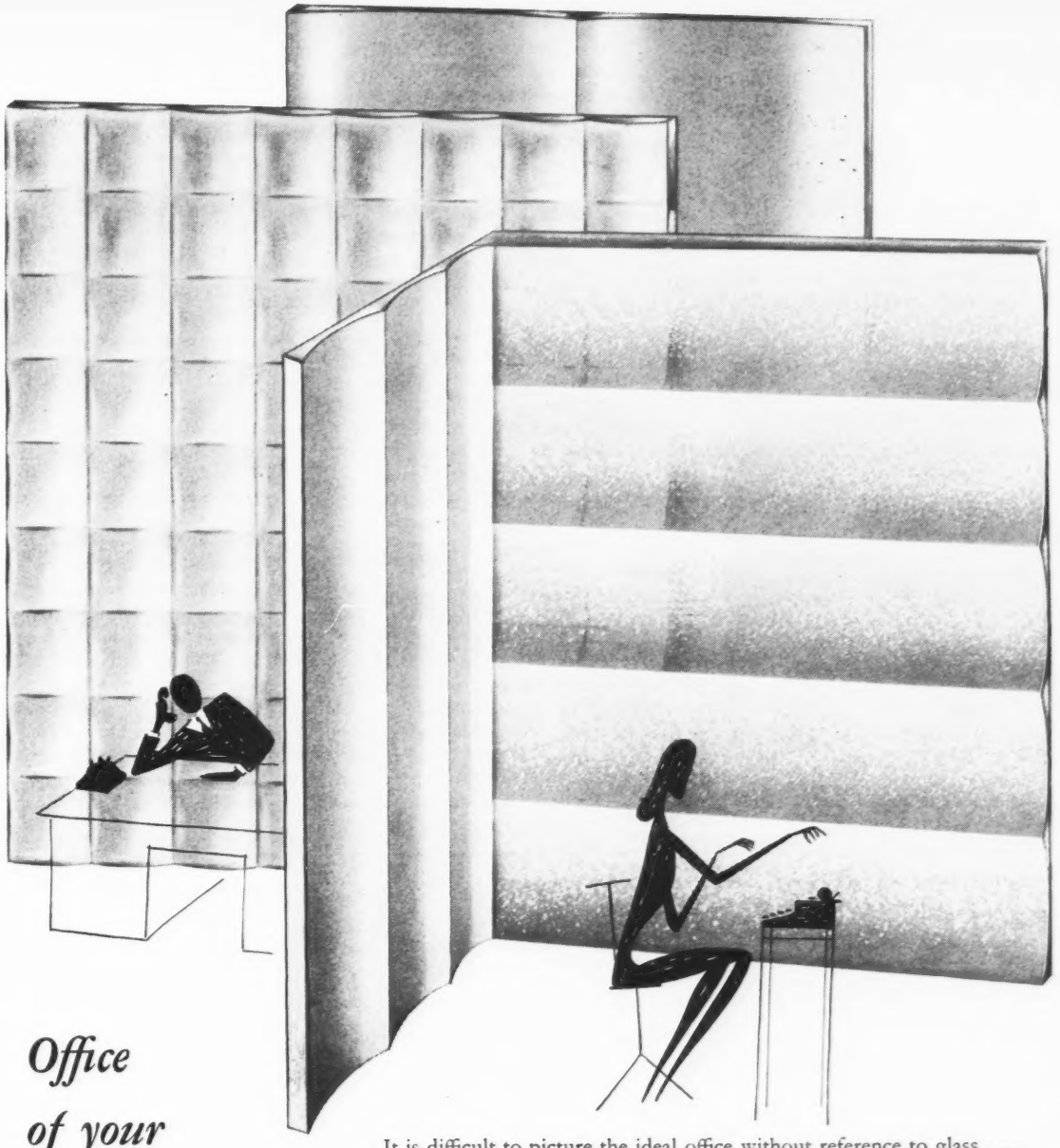

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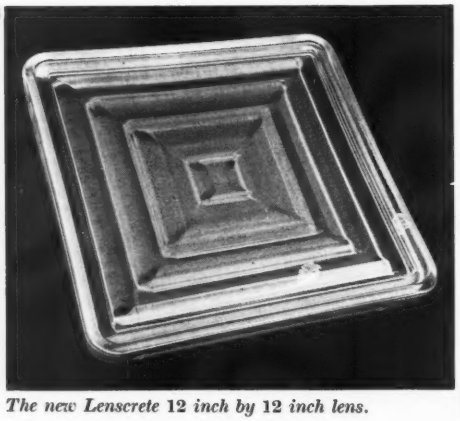
radio and a record reproducer capable of handling all types of disc recordings. The price of the Philco 'Richmond' radiogram, which is made to order, is 275 guineas, including tax.

Transparent Roofs

The development of glass as a structural material is of relatively recent date but this process inevitably reminds one of that by which the window grew from its dimensions in mediæval times to what it is today.

The 12 in. by 12 in. by 1 in. lens recently introduced by Lenscrete, Ltd., has only become possible after many years of persistent research in this and other countries into the problem of using glass and concrete together as a composite material. Gradually it has become possible to reduce the area obscured by the concrete and increase the relative area of glass. Recently the Building Research Station demonstrated that a specially graded concrete could be produced having similar expansion properties as glass, so that a watertight construction was possible under all conditions without the need for added protective coatings.

15



The new Lenscrete 12 inch by 12 inch lens.

Lenscrete, Ltd., have, with this new lens, succeeded in designing a shape which gives a wide dispersion of light and at the same time possesses a profile that is suitable for satisfactory fabrication. With its 12 inch square area of glass, its specially designed soffit which is comparable with a series of wide angle lenses, a high degree of shadowless, glareproof light is achieved, obviating deep contrast between light and shade. Its strength is such that clear spans of over 25 ft. have already been constructed, and with a combination of prestressing methods even greater spans are possible. It is, moreover, fire-resisting, provides better thermal insulation than ordinary glazing, requires no maintenance and costs no more than its forerunner, the 4 inch square pavement light lens.

Lenscrete, Ltd., Queen's Circus, S.W.8.

Centenary

The events of to-day rarely seem to be the stuff of which history is made, for they are too familiar, too much surrounded by a mass of detail and too quickly followed by new tasks even before the last is complete. A centenary is, therefore, a suitable and valuable opportunity in the life of a firm for taking mental stock, for taking that fleeting glance over the shoulder in an attempt to assess just where to-day stands in relation to yesterday.

John Laing & Son, building and civil engineering contractors, founded in 1848, have just taken this opportunity and the result is a really magnificent publication which, in its very form and presentation, suggests the scale of the projects which they undertake to-day.

Beginning in a small way at Sebergham, a village ten miles from Carlisle, Laings have, in the last fifty years, developed into one of the giants of an era of giant concerns. Their work during wartime on airfield construction, Royal Ordnance factories and Mulberry Harbour has been followed by such varied activities as a 140-acre factory for Patons & Baldwins—the largest of its kind in the world—an electric power station at Plymouth, open-cast coal-mining, new steelworks at Margam in South Wales and the development of new branches in South Africa and Northern Rhodesia.

Laing's success is based on an established tradition of craftsmanship, on their precise system of costing and estimating—which was evolved many years ago by their Governing Director, Mr. J. W. Laing, and on a human concern for their employees who spend most of their time in the vigorous and often lonely climate of the building and construction site. To this add managerial vision, practical ability and enthusiasm, without which nothing can be accomplished, and knit them together with team work and you have not only the answer to the firm's success, but also the title of this most interesting book.

John Laing & Son Ltd., Mill Hill, N.W.7.

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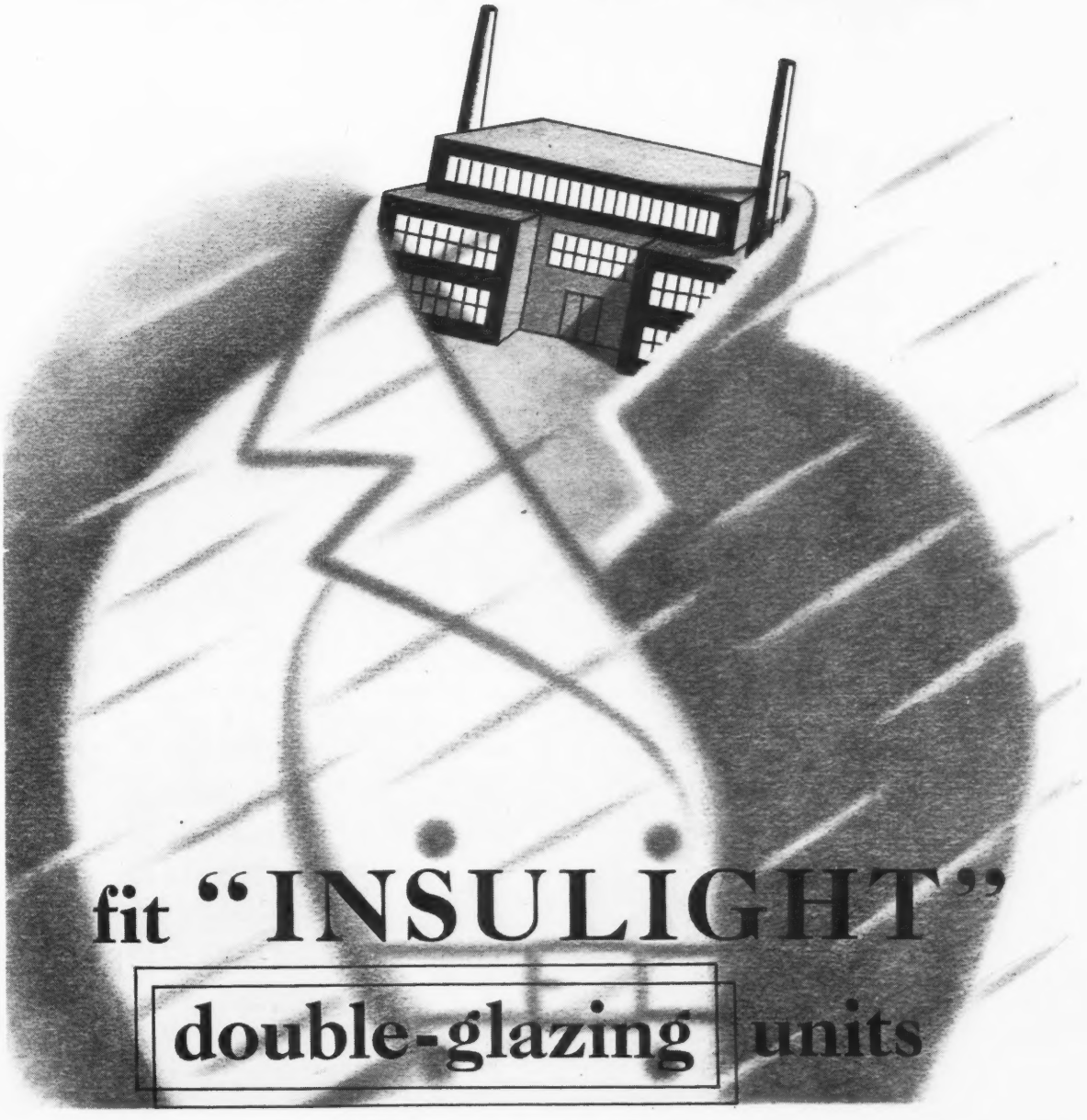

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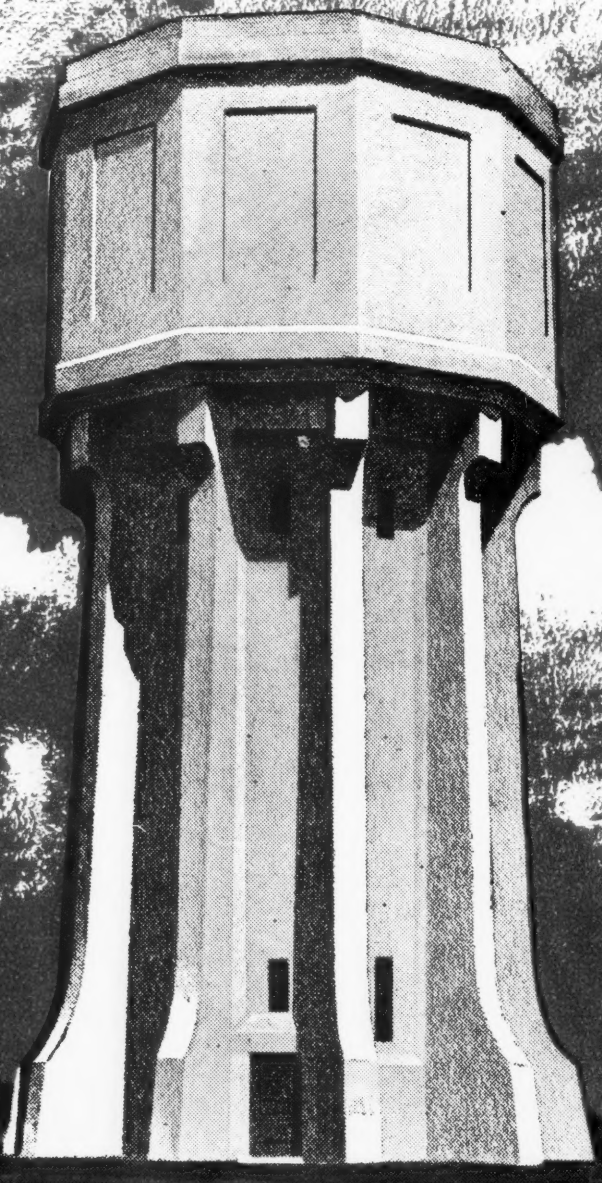

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