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South African Architectural Record: Journal of the Transvaal, Natal and Orange Free State Provincial Institutes of South African Architects and the Chapter of South African Quantity Surveyors

1939
South African Architectural Institute
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South African Architectural Record; Journal of the Transvaal, Natal and Orange Free State Provincial Institutes of South African Architects and the Chapter of South African Quantity Surveyors. vol 24:1-12 p1-524

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if we cannot easily adjust our personal conception of scale to the measure of this great building, there remains an achievement which demands a reasoned and serious estimate. Rossellino made a model of the Rucellai. Of the Piccolomini he made a masterpiece.

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1 Palast Architektur Italiens.

2 South African Architectural Record, November, 1937.



QUATTROCENTO BY SIGMUND POLLITZER

DECORATIVE PANEL OF POLISHED BLACK GLASS

REPRODUCED FROM THE STUDIO



NORWICH CITY HALL

THE WORLD OF ARCHITECTURE

REVIEWED BY JOHN FASSLER

"The World of Architecture," which is to appear occasionally, will summarise outstanding events in current architectural affairs. In this series different writers will draw attention to items which might otherwise have been overlooked. In each case there will be complete independence in the selection and treatment of material.

R.M.

The publication in last month's issue of the "South African Architectural Record" of the winning designs in the Nigel Town Hall Competition, coupled with the description of Norwich City Hall in the November issue of the "Architectural Review," leads one to reflect on the limitations of the competition system. Town halls are perhaps the most popular type of building, designs for which are settled to some extent by this method. Town hall architecture will consequently lag behind the latest architectural developments because of the fact that assessors will always remain conscious of their responsibility towards the citizens, who, as ratepayers, finance the projects. Individual members of a community may be prepared to accept an advanced solution, but taken in the mass the standard which receives general approbation is much more conservative.

Bearing on the subject of competitions, the "Architect's Journal" for November 20th published an interesting editorial entitled "Cost and the Competition." The article dealt with the difficulty of estimating the cost of competition buildings such as town halls, hospitals, etc., on the basis of cube rates. The general well-known tendency on the part of competitors is to produce the best scheme possible in terms of site and requirements, and then on the basis of the stipulated total cost against volume, to arrive at certain cube rates which sound reasonable. It is safe to say, consequently, that no building designed in a competition has been completed for an amount equal to the original estimated cost. One other point is also important; architects who have most to gain by winning a competition, and who have the necessary time available, are usually setting out in practice. In the majority of cases, therefore, they will lack the experience of pricing the type of building they have been called upon to design. Some interesting suggestions are put forward in conclusion which are reproduced here.

"The promoters of, say, a municipal offices competition would appoint an assessor in collaboration with the R.I.B.A. as at present. The latter would then appoint a quantity surveyor experienced in municipal buildings to advise him on cost. These two would together examine the sum the promoters wanted to spend in the light of the accommodation, finish and equipment asked for; and would check the accuracy of this sum against the known final cost of approximately similar buildings. This may be done at present unofficially. One can only say that it does not appear to be done. The assessor would thereafter state in his conditions the net estimated cost of the building, the constructional methods assumed for this purpose, the standard of finish and services required, and the P.C. sums allowed for the specialist equipment, layout of grounds and other items.

"If any competitor considered that he had a cheaper method of construction and finish than those suggested, he would be at liberty to use them and describe them in detail. Otherwise all calculations of cost made by competitors would be for their own use and guidance—none would be submitted. Only when the assessor has narrowed his possible winners to three or four would cost again appear on the scene, in the form of the quantity surveyor's estimates prepared by a standard measurement after careful consideration

of the author's suggestions as to construction and finish. This method must give better results than the hopeful speculations of a hundred jaded competitors. And it would leave architects free to do what they can do; design a building."

Norwich City Hall is a product of the competition system. It is parallel in feeling, I think, with such buildings as the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, and the new R.I.B.A. building in London. Admittedly as a city hall it has more character than is usual for a public building in England, which surprising fact must have decided the editors of the "Review" to devote a special number to it. Judged from a purely architectural standpoint, the building does not warrant such emphasis. However, as usual, the best has been made of the material, which is presented with great thoroughness. Those parts of the description dealing with the general construction are most informative.



HOUSE AT AMERSHAM
1932

A. D. CONNELL

A recent house by Connell, Ward and Lucas, illustrated in the "Architect's Journal" for October 27th, 1938, deserves special mention. Before describing it, a short resumé of the early work of individual members of the firm will help to provide it with some perspective. In 1932 A. D. Connell carried out a house at Amersham, in Buckinghamshire, which achieved wide notoriety at the time. The plan, although detailed in terms of a modern idiom, remained essentially traditional in its main force. Externally the rather severe character echoed the struggle members of the architectural avant-garde were waging to gain recognition in England.

In 1933, Connell and Ward, in collaboration completed a house at Grayswood, and the accompanying illustration shows clearly the great advance made in the plastic treatment of the interior. But while the house externally formed a superb essay in the marshalling of voids, solids and surfaces, the plan remained unorganised.



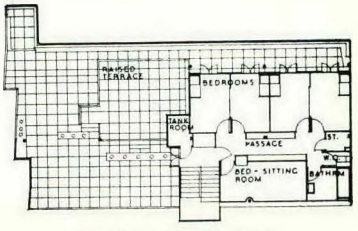
1938 CONNELL WARD AND LUCAS
HOUSE AT FROGNAL HAMPSTEAD
(PLANS BELOW)



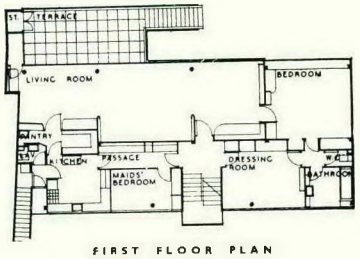
1933 CONNELL AND WARD



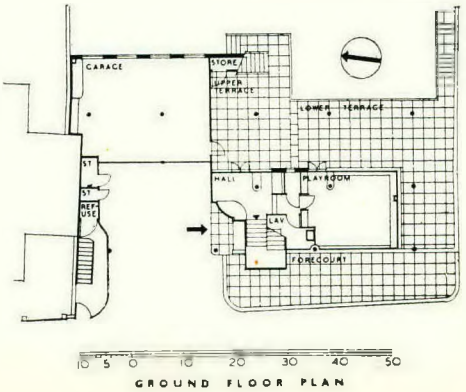
1933 COLIN LUCAS



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

In the same year Colin Lucas carried out a small house in Kent. Here the architectural treatment was excellent in all three dimensions.

The latest work in which Connell, Ward and Lucas have collaborated, a house in Frognal Hampstead, is consistent throughout. The fine plastic sense still holds sway externally, but it is aligned with a lightness of touch in the planning that is refreshing. The problem was an interesting one. A great deal of accommodation was required on a site only .165 of an acre in extent. The ingenious solution illustrated here places the garage under the house, the top of this element being utilised as a terrace. The living zone occurs on the first floor level, while a large covered terrace on the floor above re-utilises the space occupied on the site by the greater part of the accommodation. In this way the limited amenities of the site have been extended rather than encroached upon.

"L'Architecture d' Aujourd'hui" is issuing a series of special numbers devoted to aspects of architecture which are of constant interest to-day. Air raid precautions, gardens, school design, have been dealt with, and now: "Le Spectacle." The last-named September issue for 1938 illustrates concisely and in great detail all phases of this fascinating subject. Commencing with an historical review of the theatre from Greece to modern times, it passes to the development of lighting which to-day forms the most important element in the design of stage sets. All aspects are thoroughly illustrated by means of photographs and diagrams. Those dealing with the stage equipment are particularly informative. The survey, besides illustrating many recent theatres on the Continent, includes also chapters on: the portable theatre, cinemas, open-air theatre, public fêtes, with special reference to those held in Paris recently. The survey concludes with an interesting series of photographs showing the evolution in the design of stage sets. The example illustrated here by Derain is in his best pictorial vein, but while a typical product of his method, has, at the same time, a sufficient feeling of caricature to render it suitable for presentation on the stage.

As a reference book on the theatre this number is well worth acquiring.



ANDRE DERAIN

International expositions are always of significance to architects. The temporary nature of these, and the fact that pavilions must hold the attention of visitors, makes it possible for designers to work in an architectural medium far in advance of the normal level which proves acceptable to any given community. . . . The short time for which the pavilions are required, plus the fact that their cost has to be amortised during the term of the exposition, gives an impetus to the exploration of new methods of construction and materials with a view to the reduction of costs. Another aspect of world fairs is also of importance. A world fair serves as an index to a country's aesthetic level. In this connection it is only necessary to think of the impressions created by Stockholm or Paris. To carry the analogy further, we may conclude that the Chicago Exposition a few years ago was an index of America's taste in art and architecture. If this is so, then it is to be hoped that the New York World's Fair in 1939 will establish a considerable advance over its meretricious predecessor.

The "Architectural Record" for November, 1938, publishes preliminary photographs of the progress which has been made in the preparation of the Fair. The construction of the larger exhibits, and the landscaping is well under way. From the impressive statistics provided regarding what has already been achieved, it is clear that the Americans intend the gates to open, for once, on a completed scheme. In this respect their typically efficient organisation has enabled them to control the time factor. The task of preparing the site has not been an easy one. One thousand two hundred and sixteen acres of marsh-land and rubbish dump, without any amenities whatever, have had to be converted into fertile parklands amidst which the pavilions and their gardens will be set.

If we regard calmly the manner in which the site has been knocked into shape, or the 4,000,000 lineal feet of piling which was driven for foundations, we cannot fail to be impressed by the huge scale on which the Fair is framed. Return for a moment to the Tower of Light at our recent Empire Exhibition at Johannesburg. It was with difficulty that this element achieved a height of 150 feet, in solid concrete at that. By comparison we can only be favourably impressed by the construction of the Trylon at the centre of the Fair, which attains a height of 700 feet, the first 500 feet being of structural steelwork, and the remaining 200 feet of a self-supporting exterior sheathing



LONG ISLAND R.R. STATION
FAIR CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT
DESIGNERS

of rivetted steel plates. An excellent series of photographs shows how a fine use of structural steelwork has made the realisation of many ambitious projects a simple matter.

We look forward at a later date to perusing the illustrations of the completed Fair. In the meantime it is to be hoped that the American weakness for showmanship will be tempered by the efforts of the sincerer architects.

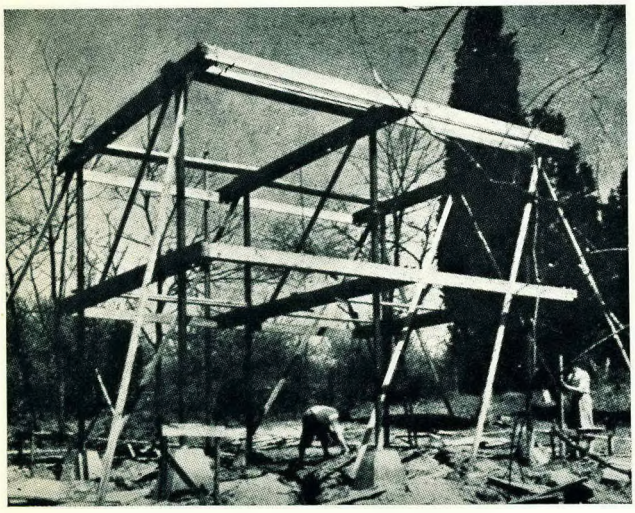
The "Architectural Forum" for November, 1938, announces the publication of a supplement six times yearly which is to be called "Plus." The aim of this supplement is to supply "the need for a medium to correlate the artistic and scientific data which influence contemporary space regulation." In this direction it is the intention of "Plus" "to bring together such work of architects, artists and scientists, which will clarify existing problems and perhaps point direction." (Sounds rather like what the "South African Architectural Record" has been trying to do for years.) The dynamic layout and typography, by Herbert Matter, promise that the supplement will become an important addition to the pages of the "Forum," while the formidable list of editors include such well-known names as Le Corbusier, P. Morton Shand, Marcel Breuer, William Lescaze, Moholy-Nagy and Richard Neutra.

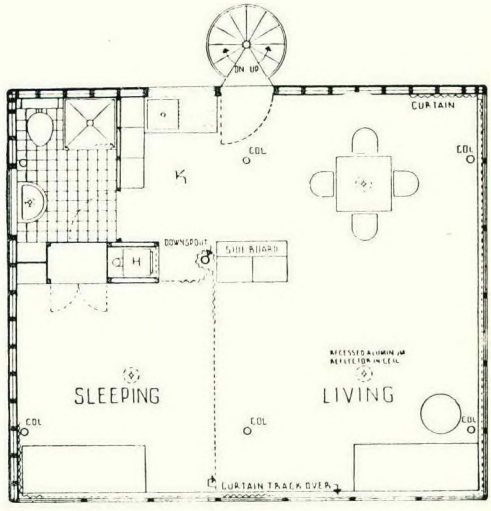
In the same issue a correspondent asks some interesting questions regarding the fate of a week-end house illustrated in the "Forum" for October, 1935. It appears that this lightly constructed building was recently in the path of

WEEK-END HOUSE, NORTHPORT, LONG ISLAND A LAWRENCE KOCHER AND ALBERT FREY, ARCHITECTS



Described by the architects as a vacation house, its planning and treatment show the close relation with outdoor living which was sought. Two walls of glass admit ample sunlight, which may be controlled by awnings and curtains; they also give an excellent view of the surrounding countryside. A notable feature is that while the house consists of but one story, the light steel columns and flat roof give it three living levels: the space below is used for a porch as well as an automobile shelter while the roof is used for sunbathing and outdoor sleeping in summer. The facing of the house is particularly interesting, being of heavy canvas laid over tongued and grooved redwood flooring. Walls are insulated by aluminium foil placed as a continuous membrane between the exterior and interior of the 4in. wall. The interior wall finish is $\frac{1}{4}$in. plywood. Cost, including furnishings: $982.





FOUNDATION

Footings—concrete, tapered sides resting on concrete slab.

Pavement under house at ground level——concrete.

FRAME CONSTRUCTION

Columns—4" steel tubes (extra heavy section) support a pair of 2" x 10"s bolted to a welded-on steel "fin" that penetrates columns. A 10" square steel plate $\frac{3}{4}$" thick is welded to base of each column. Columns not filled with concrete.

Joists—floor and roof 2" x 8".

Bridging—double row.

Studding—two 2" x 2"s to take membrane of aluminium foil between (see "Insulating").

Exterior facing—3" California redwood flooring laid diagonally. Exposed surface sanded.

EXTERIOR SURFACE

Facing given one coat of bedding paint to serve as a preservative and adhesive base for canvas. Canvas "Duck" No. 6, 42" wide stretched on wall; joints lapped $1\frac{1}{2}$" and nailed $\frac{3}{4}$" apart with spiral, double clad zinc nails; surface of canvas sponged slightly; canvas paint applied as 2 surface coats; final paint aluminium.

Ground floor ceiling—Masonite.

ROOF

3" California redwood flooring laid diagonally covered with No. 4 cotton duck canvas "Mt. Vernon" treatment similar to walls.

Flashing—canvas surface requires no flashing.

Down spout—cast iron connected to copper drain pipe at centre of house.

a hurricane that swept over Long Island, causing extensive damage. If the house had been a conventional one I would not have drawn attention to the query, but as the illustration shows, it is just the type of building that would be expected to be uprooted and bowled over by such severe treatment. The reply, I think, warrants reprinting.

"The house to which Architect Coombe refers was directly in the path of the recent hurricane, but weathered the fracas entirely unharmed. The force of the wind against and over one side of a conventionally designed house causes a destructive vacuum on the opposite side. In the case of the week-end house designed by Architects A. Lawrence Kocher and Albert Frey, the wind —which was sufficiently strong to bowl over a 30-foot oak tree 100 yards leeward—rushed over and under the building, and left it undisturbed. The steel stilts prevented damage from flood waters.

The U.S. Government considers this house so completely storm proof that for three Government observers in the hurricane-ridden Canal Zone three houses have been completed from practically identical Kocher and Frey designs."

The survey of a series of architectural journals leaves one with the impression that although a great volume of work is being carried out to-day, only a small proportion attains the dignity of publication. Of that small proportion a still smaller fraction appeals to individual architects. The comments embodied in this dissertation represent a point of view. Should it perhaps conflict with current opinion, then one can assume that the journals in question have been successful in constituting a forum in which differing viewpoints may be discerned.

DOOR AND WINDOW FRAMES
- Sash and frames, steel factory-type Fenestra sash throughout, 3 windows projecting.
- Doors and frames (exterior)—steel frame doors.

GLASS
- Lustra, ultra-violet, by American Window Glass Co.
- Ground floor ceiling—aluminium paint.
- Sash and Railing
  - Priming—metal paint.
  - Finish coat—"Duco."

INTERIOR WOODWORK
- Floor—California redwood covered with canvas and painted like outside but with colour as finish coat.
- Walls—¼" plywood, clear white pine.

INSULATING
- Outside walls—continuous membrane of double-faced aluminium foil between studs providing two air spaces.
- Floor and roof—continuous double-faced aluminium foil placed 2" below floor and roof, insulating against heat and cold.
- 2nd floor ceiling—rigid insulation board by Johns-Manville.

INTERIOR PAINTING
- Floors—clear spar varnish in addition to canvas paint.
- Walls clear spar varnish.
- Doors
- Sash—metal paint and "Duco."

HEATING
- Coal.
- Heater—Vecto No. 2 (central convection) by American Radiator Co.

SCREENS
- Copper.

WINDOW DRESSING
- Shades and curtains—made of Revolite.
- Awnings—for control of sun heat.

OF BUILDING BY

Houses are built to live in, and not to look on; therefore let use be preferred before uniformity, except where both may be had. Leave the goodly fabrics of houses, for beauty only, to the enchanted palaces of the poets, who build them with small cost. He that builds a fair house upon an ill seat, committeth himself to prison: neither do I reckon it an ill seat only where the air is unwholesome, but likewise where the air is unequal; as you shall see many fine seats set upon a knap of ground, environed with higher hills round about it, whereby the heat of the sun is pent in, and the wind gathereth as in troughs; so as you shall have, and that suddenly, as great diversity of heat and cold as if you dwelt in several places. Neither is it ill air only that maketh an ill seat; but ill ways, ill markets, and, if you will consult with Momus, ill neighbours. I speak not of many more; want of water, want of wood, shade, and shelter, want of fruitfulness, and mixture of grounds of several natures; want of prospect, want of level grounds, want of places at some near distance for sports of hunting, hawking, and races; too near the sea, too remote; having the commodity of navigable rivers, or the discommodity of their overflowing; too far off from great cities, which may hinder business; nor too near them, which lurcheth all provisions, and maketh everything dear; where a man hath a great living laid together; and where he is scanted; all which, as it is impossible perhaps to find together, so it is good to know them, and think of them, that a man may take as many as he can; and if he have several dwellings, that he sort them so, that what he wanteth in the one he may find in the other. Lucullus answered Pompey well, who, when he saw his stately galleries and rooms so large and lightsome, in one of his houses, said, "Surely an excellent place for summer, but how do you in winter?" Lucullus answered, "Why, do you not think me as wise as some fowls are, that ever change their abode towards the winter?"

To pass from the seat to the house itself, we will do as Cicero doth in the orator's art, who writes books De Oratore, and a book he entitles Orator; whereof the former delivers the precepts of the art, and the latter the perfection. We will therefore describe a princely palace, making a brief model thereof; for it is strange to see, now in Europe, such huge buildings as the Vatican and Escurial, and some others be, and yet scarce a very fair room in them.

First, therefore, I say, you cannot have a perfect palace, except you have two several sides; a side for the banquet, as is spoken of in the book of Esther, and a side for the household; the one for feasts and triumphs, and the other for dwelling. I understand both these sides to be not only returns, but parts

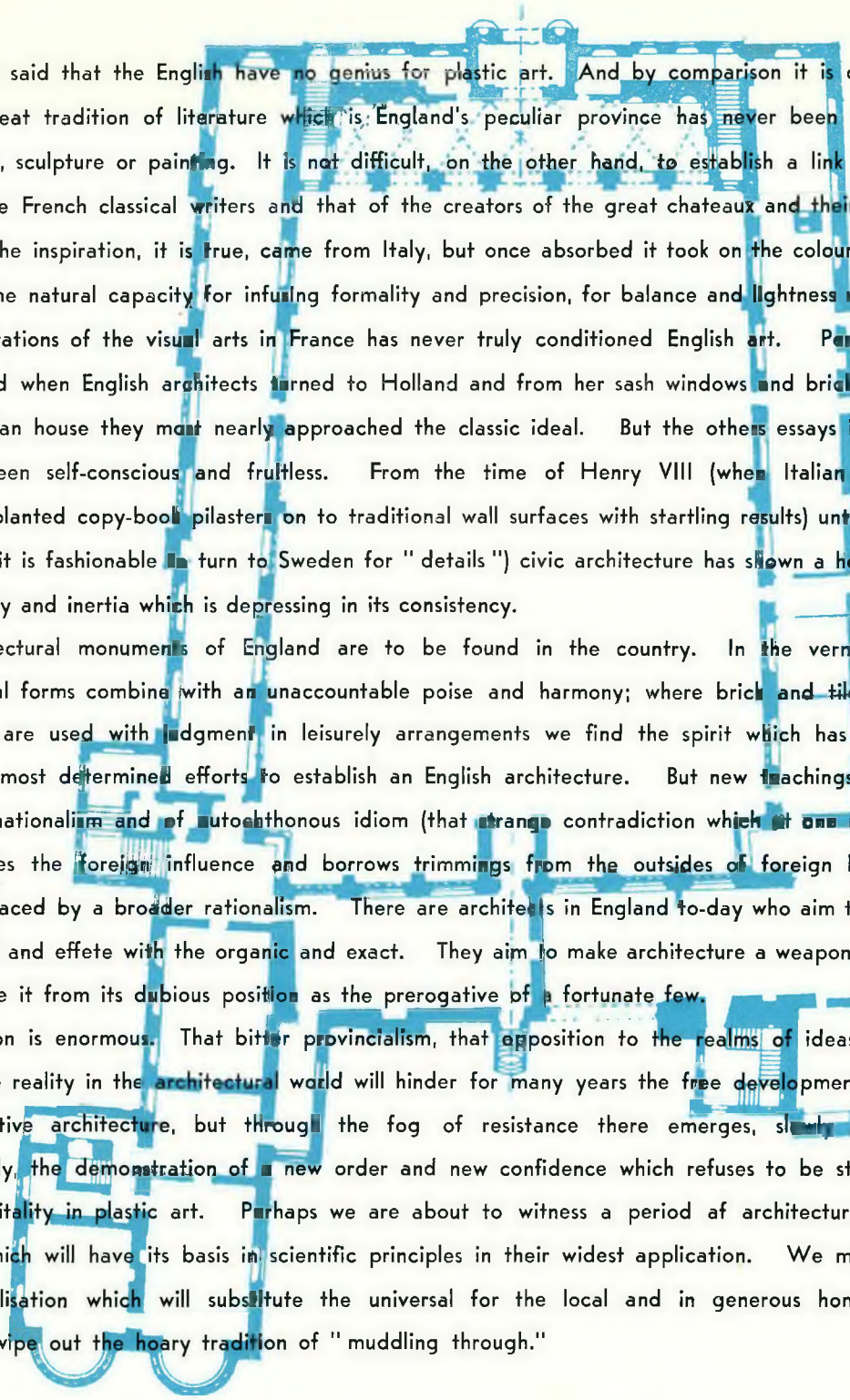
of the front; and to be uniform without, though severally partitioned within; and to be on both sides of a great and stately tower in the midst of the front, that as it were joineth them together on either hand. I would have, on the side of the banquet in front, one only goodly room above stairs, of some forty foot high; and under it a room for a dressing or preparing place at times of triumphs. On the other side, which is the household side, I wish it divided at the first into a hall and a chapel (with a partition between), both of good state and bigness; and those not to go all the length, but to have at the further end a winter and a summer parlour, both fair; and under these rooms a fair and large cellar sunk under ground; and likewise some privy kitchens, with butteries and pantries, and the like. As for the tower, I would have it two stories, of eighteen foot high apiece above the two wings; and a goodly leads upon the top, railed with statues interposed; and the same tower to be divided into rooms, as shall be thought fit. The stairs likewise to the upper rooms, let them be upon a fair open newel, and finely railed in with images of wood cast into a brass colour; and a very fair landing-place at the top. But this to be, if you do not point any of the lower rooms for a dining-place for servants; for, otherwise, you shall have the servants' dinner after your own: for the steam of it will come up as in a tunnel. And so much for the front: only I understand the height of the first stairs to be sixteen foot, which is the height of the lower room.

Beyond this front is there to be a fair court, but three sides of it of a far lower building than the front; and in all the four corners of that court fair staircases, cast into turrets on the outside, and not within the row of buildings themselves: but those towers are not to be of the height of the front, but rather proportionable to the lower building. Let the court not be paved, for that striketh up a great heat in summer, and much cold in winter; but only some side alleys with a cross, and the quarters to graze, being kept shorn, but not too near shorn. The row of return on the banquet side, let it be all stately galleries: in which galleries let there be three or five fine cupolas in the length of it, placed at equal distance, and fine coloured windows of several works: on the household side, chambers of presence and ordinary entertainments, with some bed-chambers: and let all three sides be a double house, without thorough lights on the sides, that you may have rooms from the sun, both for forenoon and afternoon. Cast it also, that you may have rooms both for summer and winter; shady for summer and warm for winter. You shall have sometimes fair houses so full of glass, that one cannot tell where

to become to be out of the sun or cold. For inbowed windows, I hold them of good use (in cities, indeed, upright do better, in respect of the uniformity towards the street); for they be pretty retiring places for conference; and besides, they keep both the wind and sun off; for that which would strike almost through the room doth scarce pass the window: but let them be but few, four in the court, on the sides only.

Beyond this court, let there be an inward court, of the same square and height: which is to be environed with the garden on all sides; and in the inside, cloistered on all sides upon decent and beautiful arches, as high as the first story: on the under story towards the garden, let it be turned to grotto, or place of shade, or estivation; and only have opening and windows towards the garden, and be level upon the floor, no whit sunk under ground to avoid all dampishness: and let there be a fountain, or some fair work of statues in the midst of this court, and to be paved as the other court was. These buildings to be for privy lodgings on both sides, and the end for privy galleries; whereof you must foresee that one of them be for an infirmary, if the prince or any special person should be sick, with chambers, bed-chamber, anticamera, and recamera, joining to it; this upon the second story. Upon the ground story, a fair gallery, open, upon pillars; and upon the third story, likewise an open gallery upon pillars, to take the prospect and freshness of the garden. At both corners of the further side, by way of return, let there be two delicate or rich cabinets, daintily paved, richly hanged, glazed with crystalline glass, and a rich cupola in the midst; and all other elegancy that can be thought upon. In the upper gallery, too, I wish that there may be, if the place will yield it, some fountains running in divers places from the wall, with some fine avoidances. And thus much for the model of the palace; save that you must have, before you come to the front, three courts; a green court, plain, with a wall about it; a second court of the same, but more garnished with little turrets or rather embellishments, upon the wall; and a third court, to make a square with the front, but not to be built, nor yet enclosed with a naked wall, but enclosed with terraces leaded aloft and fairly garnished on the three sides; and cloistered on the inside with pillars, and not with arches below. As for offices, let them stand at distance, with some low galleries to pass from them to the palace itself.

THE ENGLISH SPIRIT



It has been said that the English have no genius for plastic art. And by comparison it is certainly true that the great tradition of literature which is England's peculiar province has never been paralleled in architecture, sculpture or painting. It is not difficult, on the other hand, to establish a link between the spirit of the French classical writers and that of the creators of the great chateaux and their magnificent settings. The inspiration, it is true, came from Italy, but once absorbed it took on the colour of all things French. The natural capacity for infusing formality and precision, for balance and lightness which informs all manifestations of the visual arts in France has never truly conditioned English art. Perhaps for the brief period when English architects turned to Holland and from her sash windows and brickwork created the Georgian house they most nearly approached the classic ideal. But the others essays in adaptation have all been self-conscious and fruitless. From the time of Henry VIII (when Italian and Flemish craftsmen planted copy-book pilasters on to traditional wall surfaces with startling results) until the present day (when it is fashionable in turn to Sweden for "details") civic architecture has shown a heavy timidity, a mediocrity and inertia which is depressing in its consistency.

The architectural monuments of England are to be found in the country. In the vernacular where architectural forms combine with an unaccountable poise and harmony; where brick and tile and thatch and stone are used with judgment in leisurely arrangements we find the spirit which has escaped the architect's most determined efforts to establish an English architecture. But new teachings are abroad, tenets of nationalism and of autochthonous idiom (that strange contradiction which at one and the same time decries the foreign influence and borrows trimmings from the outsides of foreign buildings) are being displaced by a broader rationalism. There are architects in England to-day who aim to replace the sentimental and effete with the organic and exact. They aim to make architecture a weapon for humanity and remove it from its dubious position as the prerogative of a fortunate few.

The reaction is enormous. That bitter provincialism, that opposition to the realms of ideas which is an unfortunate reality in the architectural world will hinder for many years the free development of a lyrical and collective architecture, but through the fog of resistance there emerges, slowly perhaps, but unmistakably, the demonstration of a new order and new confidence which refuses to be stifled. There is a new vitality in plastic art. Perhaps we are about to witness a period af architectural activity in England which will have its basis in scientific principles in their widest application. We may still see a plastic realisation which will substitute the universal for the local and in generous homage to first principles wipe out the hoary tradition of "muddling through."

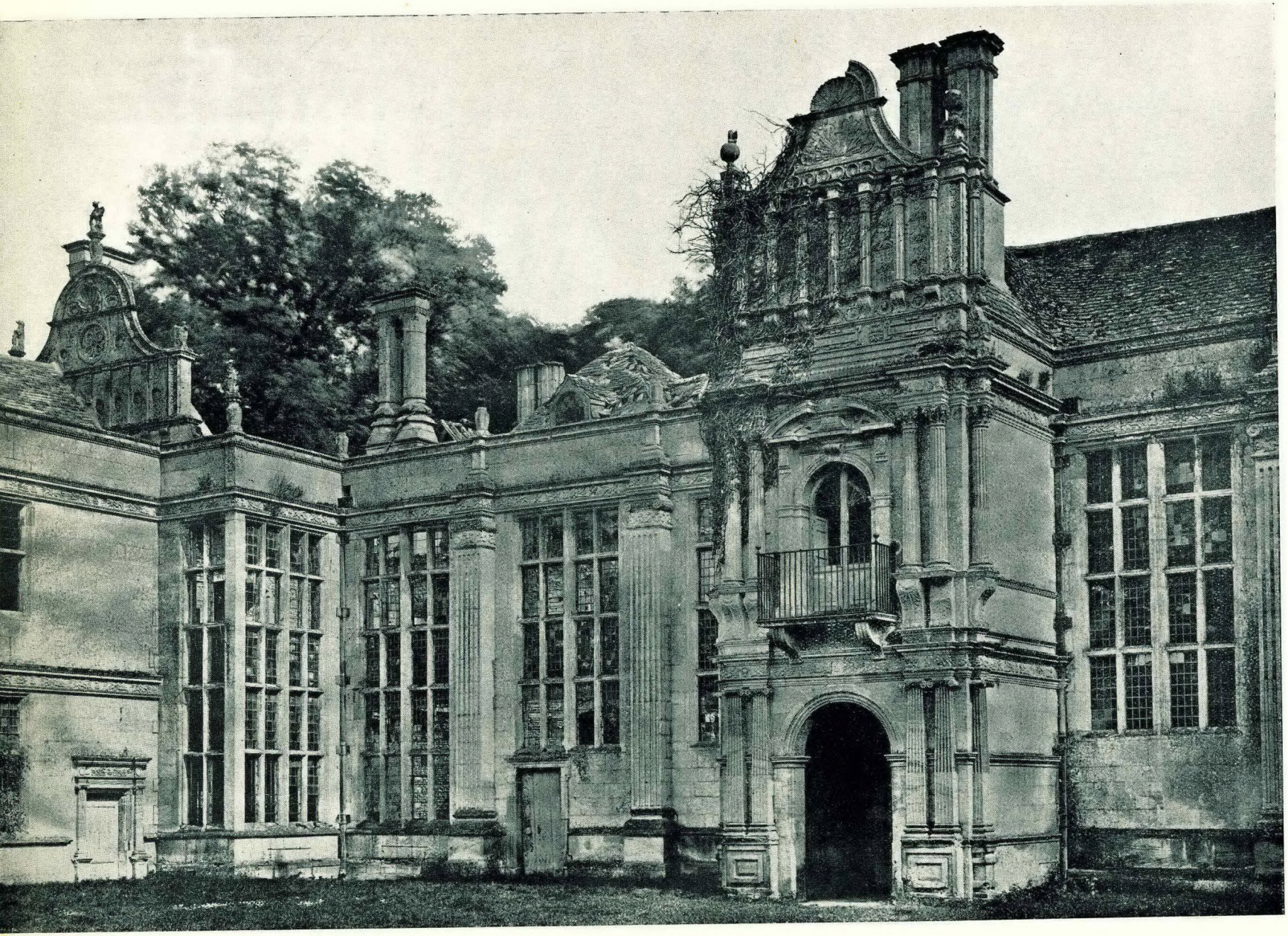
R.M.

On this page: the plan of Kirby Hall



TWO VIEWS OF KIRBY HALL

DESIGNED BY JOHN THORPE



CASTLES IN SPAIN

"History of Spanish Architecture," by Bernard Bevan. B. T. Batsford, London, 21/-.

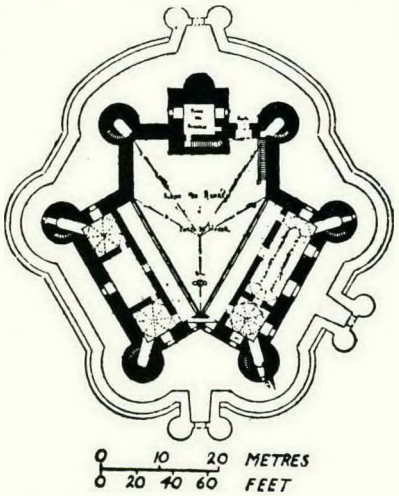
"The Architecture of Spain is Alluvial." There is something almost matter of fact about the Roman attitude to Colonial work. Buildings follow the accepted pattern and reflect no impress of exotic influence. The aqueduct loses no majesty by virtue of its distance from Italy. It is an impressive pointer to the might of Rome that her architecture may be studied as profitably at Nimes or Segovia as on the banks of the Tiber.

In Spain the Roman character was maintained for several hundreds of years, though it changed slightly with the advent of troops from Constantinople during the 5th and 6th centuries, a change witnessed for us by an Eastern insinuation into the Roman art: thus the horseshoe arch has been almost as long in Spain as any other architectural form

With the spreading of Christianity and the stirring of the rest of the Western world, Spain seems to have become a zone of shifting intrusions: northerners from Germany and France crossed the Pyrenees and left their Gothic contributions; from Tuscany Italian artisans assailed the Eastern Spanish coast and built in their contemporary Italian manner from early Romanesque through the Classical development. The South was the Mohammedan Gateway, and throughout history this influence has been a dominating factor in affecting the styles in Spain. From the long record of extraneous imposition, what emerges as the Spanish contribution to architecture?

The student who feels the need of some clarification of the position of Spanish historic architecture in its relation to that of other countries in order to complete his own knowledge of the development of the styles, or who has had his interest awakened by some personal contact with that paradox—the voluptuous austerity of Spanish building—will find in Bernard Bevan's new book an ordered survey of architectural trends in Spain. Mr. Bevan outlines his thesis in a short introduction. Not every historian has a thesis, and few present theirs as interestingly as Mr. Bevan. Here the theme is the contact of East with West, the consequent issue, and the changes and modifications wrought by each foreign influx of ideas. Of the merits and demerits of these the author gives his reasoned opinions; but what he offers

only briefly, and what is perhaps beyond the scope† of his book, is an indication whether Spanish architecture should be studied at all in comparison with the fundamental styles of other countries. The Romanesque of Italy was adapted and developed by France into the most extreme and representative Gothic in Europe. In the same way the Italian Renaissance idiom was studied



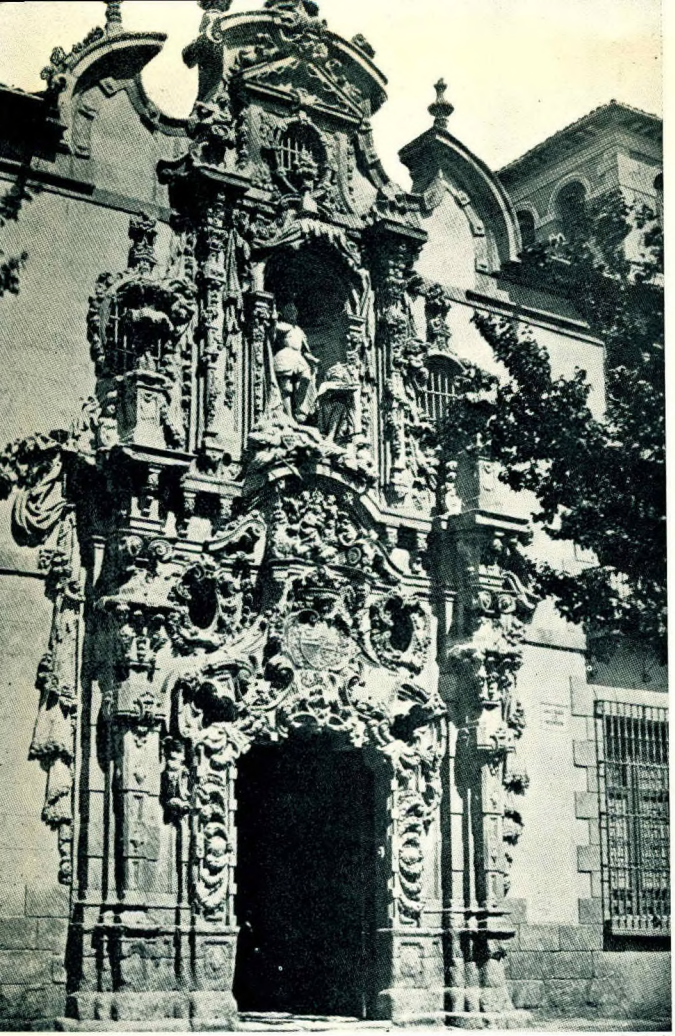
CASTLE OF BELMONTE (CUENCA) ERECTED AFTER 1456 BY JUAN PACHEO, MARQUES DE VILLENA
From "History of Spanish Architecture," by Bernard Bevan

and used as a basis for the French Classic of the later Chateaux. With Spain it would seem to have been a case of adoption rather than adaptation —Italian and French workmen, rather than influences, built the churches of Spain. Seville Cathedral may have one of the finest French Gothic interiors ever built (it is certainly the largest), but is it any more Spanish than the Roman theatre at Mérida or the Lombardic churches in Catalonia ?

Perhaps the buildings in Spain should be reviewed together with the styles in other countries which inspired them. In fact, at this point, one could debate at some length whether architectural history should not be grouped according to movements and influences regardless of geographical position, rather than following out a period and style in each separate country. In such a history one feels Spain would at no period witness the birth or death of any movement, but only offer (or accept) a contribution somewhere in the middle of its career.

Even the castles, rising from the desolate contours of the Spanish landscape, seem so typical of the romantic and Puritan atmosphere of her culture, that

† In fact, he tells us "the time is not yet ripe for an exhaustive treatise," and perhaps not yet ripe for an estimate.



HOSPICIO PROVINCIAL MADRID
(1722—1799)

(All Illustrations from "History of Spanish Architecture," By Bernard Bevan)



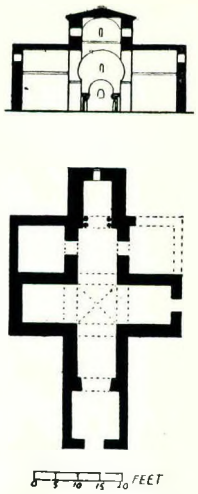
THE ALCAZAR SEGOVIA
Formerly a royal palace

one feels that they have grown from all that is Spain; even these, we are told, were largely influenced (and in many cases built) by French and Italian workmanship. They are, in fact such castles as were built in Scotland and Wales, and along the Rhine, and here and there in France, before the late Renaissance and frowned finally on all things whimsical and fortified. But here they are spiritually at home. They are finally the most Spanish of all buildings in Spain, for they represent that vague internationalism that seems to have informed all her buildings.

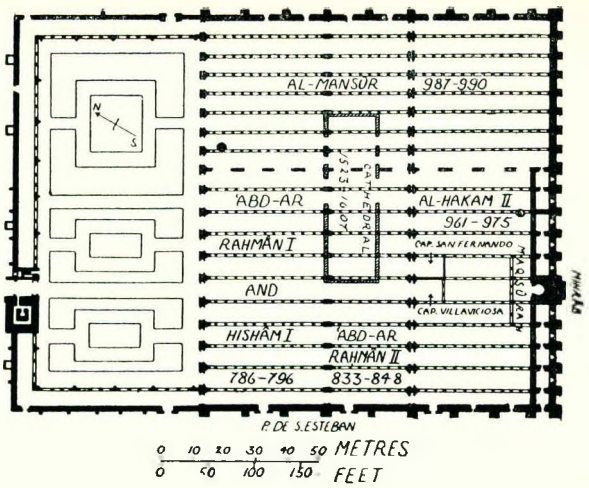
A study of some of the plans discussed by Mr. Bevan reveals a tendency towards a rugged simplicity, both in the early examples, one of which is here reproduced, and in the later Gothic work, height usually making way for width, grandeur of plan area replacing the lofty vaults. Some interesting plans are those influenced by the inclusion of Mohammedan features. Unfamiliar to Western aesthetic in the vertical dimension, on plan the plantation-like systems of light columns suggest—as in the Cordova Mosque —an extremely ordered purpose. This building is the largest cathedral after Saint Peter's, and, on plan at any rate, by far the simplest.

One wonders why historians of architecture consistently ignore the vernacular in their surveys. In books on Italy and France we miss discussion on the many dignified country and even town houses, and in such regions as Provence, whole villages, so far recorded for us only by Cézanne, which would supply a complete architectural thesis. For these we have to discover special and often incomplete works on "Lesser Known Buildings." With Spain this omission strikes the reader as particularly regrettable in view of the fact that there are comparatively few "monumental" edifices such as cathedrals and monasteries of merit. Moreover the vernacular of Spain is actually better remembered than the civic, both by those who know it only through photographs and colonial imitations, and by the traveller who has seen the compositions of white wall and grey tile that grace the olive farms of Andalusia.

I think most architects are a trifle hazy on Spain. These will find much of interest in Mr. Bevan's book, for he writes sustainedly and with consideration. Perhaps he lingers too lovingly among the different Muslim styles, the Gothic and Baroque, to please one reared in the Classic tradition: still, he neglects no aspect of architectural development and includes among the early



Santa Comba da Bande (Orense) 8th cent.



The Mosque of Cordova. Restored plan showing dates of construction

Romanesque churches some refreshing examples to be remembered with their more famous contemporaries in Italy. Bernard Bevan publishes his book at a time when the fate of Spanish historic possessions is being arbitrarily decided. Many of the buildings he describes and illustrates will not be seen and photographed again. His comments in such cases—" utterly destroyed in 1936 "—cause the reader to ponder on the slender chances that build up a history of art. For the rest, the maps are poor fare to offer serious students of architecture. Informal lettering ill accords with printed charts and maps, and spoils what would otherwise be a thoughtful inclusion. The wrapper, too, is insipid, and does not reflect the care that has been expended on typography and layout. On the other hand, the photographs are excellent, and may indeed be a final comment on much of Spanish architecture. The biography is exhaustive and, to the uninitiated, chastening. Bernard Bevan's " History of Spanish Architecture " is a foundation upon which to build a critical attitude; it is a carefully authenticated investigation, the work of a scholar.

HEATHER MARTIENSSEN

CENTRAL COUNCIL NOTICES.

RE "HOWDEN PRIZE."

The First Competition for the Howden Medal and a prize of £50 is now in being. A copy of the Conditions of Competition will reach every Member of the Institute before the end of January, 1939.

RE CONGRESS OF ARCHITECTS AND QUANTITY SURVEYORS.

The next Congress of South African Architects and Quantity Surveyors will be held at Port Elizabeth on Tuesday and Wednesday, April 4th and 5th, 1939. The Annual Meeting of the Central Council (which Members of the Institute and the Chapter may attend) has been arranged to take place on the Monday before, and the Thursday following, the Congress.

The Executive Committee of the Central Council will gladly consider, for inclusion in the Congress Agenda, any items of vital importance to the Professions which Members wish to submit. Such items should be forwarded to the Registrar as soon as possible.

RE PROFESSIONAL LICENCES.

The following information has been obtained from the office of the Receiver of Revenue, Johannesburg:

(i) The collection of the professional licence fees hitherto payable by Architects and Quantity Surveyors, has been suspended until a decision on the matter has been made by the respective Provincial Councils.

(ii) The Receivers of Revenue in the various centres in the Union have accordingly been instructed that, for the time being, they are not to issue such licences; and, should any cheques in payment therefor be submitted, they are to be returned.

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FIFTEENTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ARCHITECTS, WASHINGTON, U.S.A., SEPTEMBER, 1939.

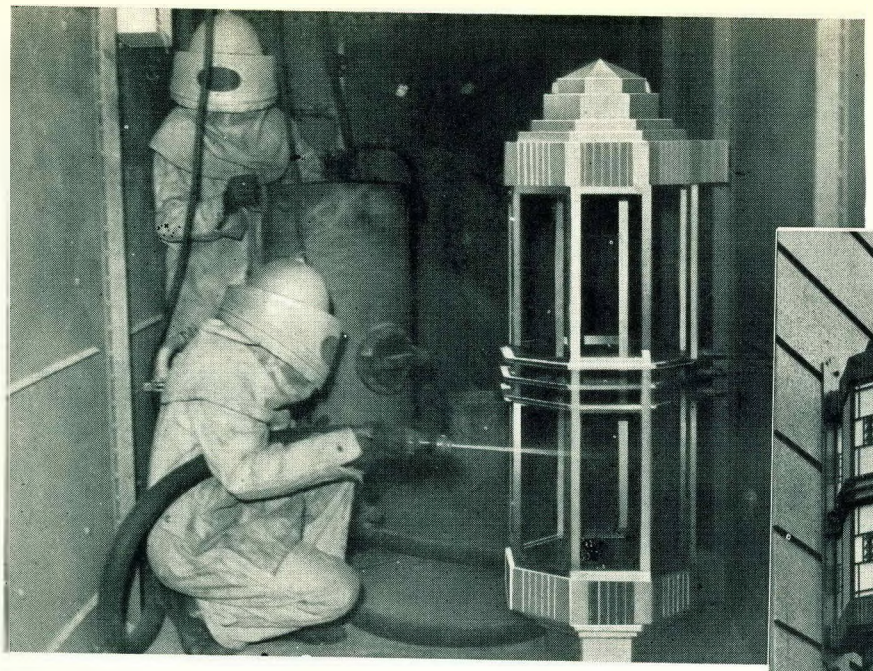
Referring to the notice which appeared in the November issue of this Journal, should any member be contemplating a visit to the United States about the time of the Congress, he is requested to communicate with the Secretary of the Transvaal Provincial Institute.

South African Academy

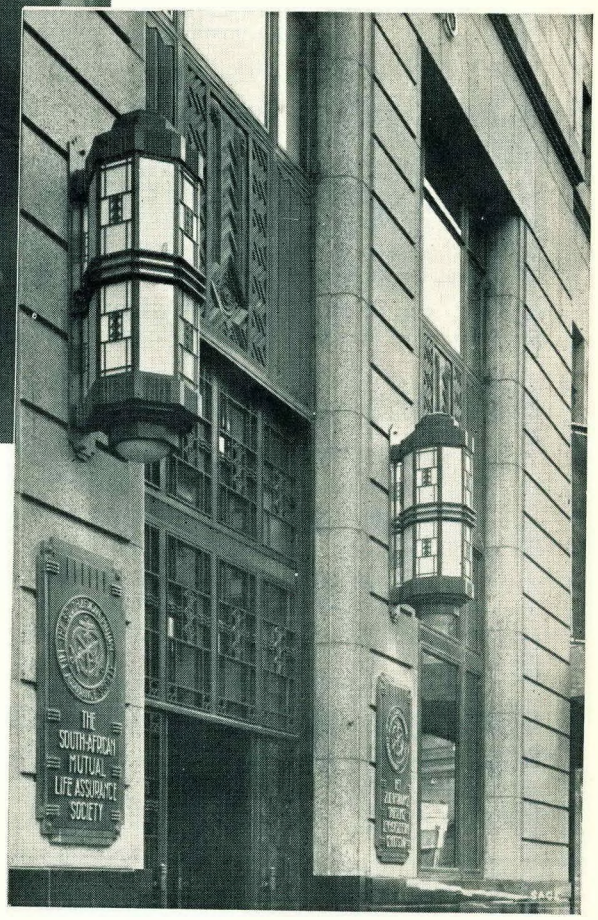
Annual Exhibition

Selborne Hall

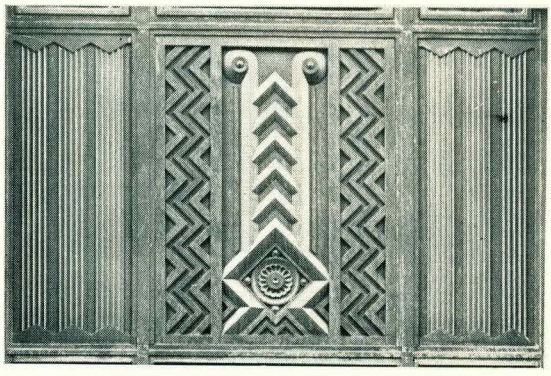
13th to 25th March, 1939.



The lantern for the SOUTH AFRICAN MUTUAL BUILDINGS is shown during the process of sand-blasting and also when completed and erected.



An excellent example of a Bronze Panel with a sandblasted finish at the SOUTH AFRICAN MUTUAL BUILDINGS.



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