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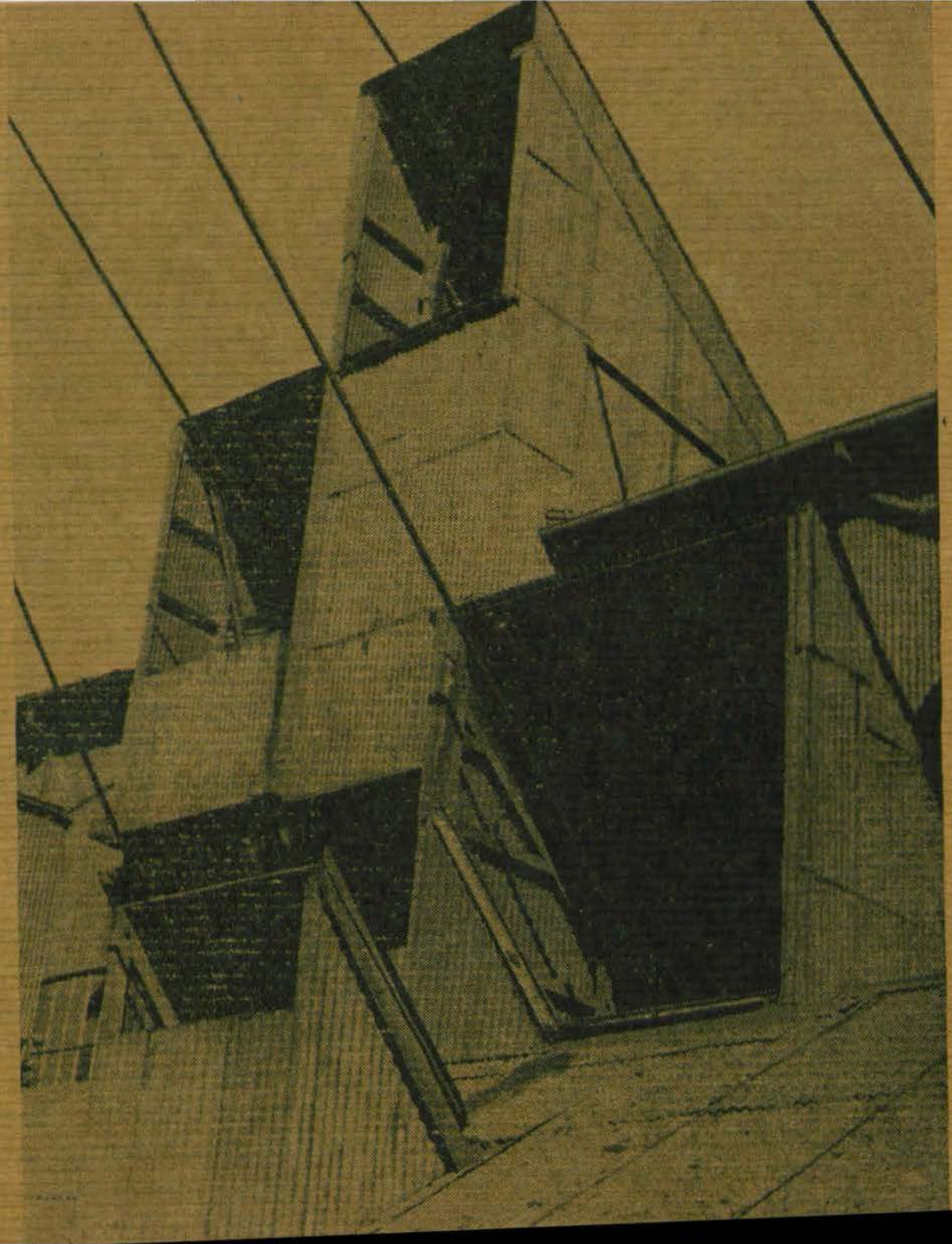
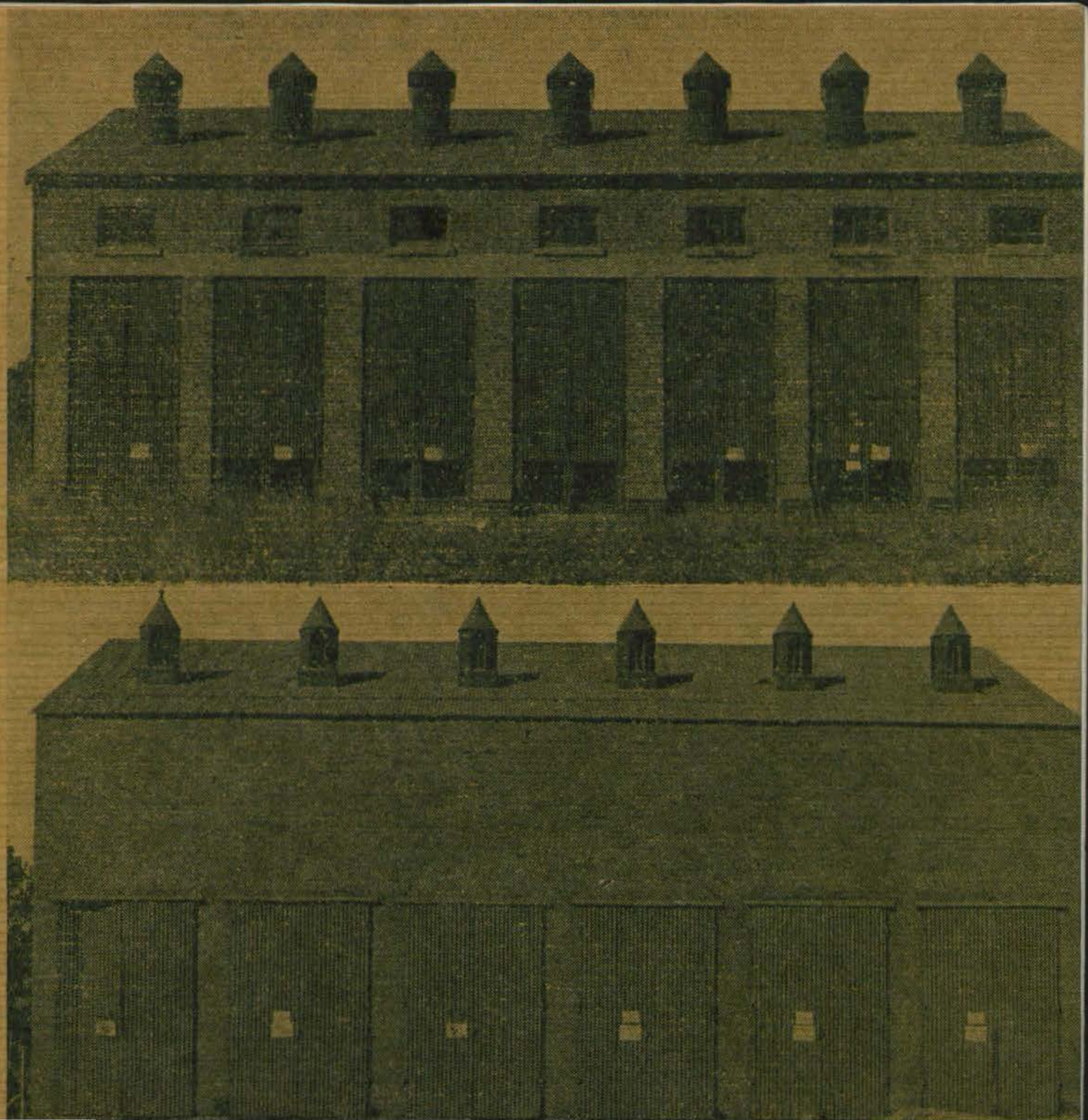
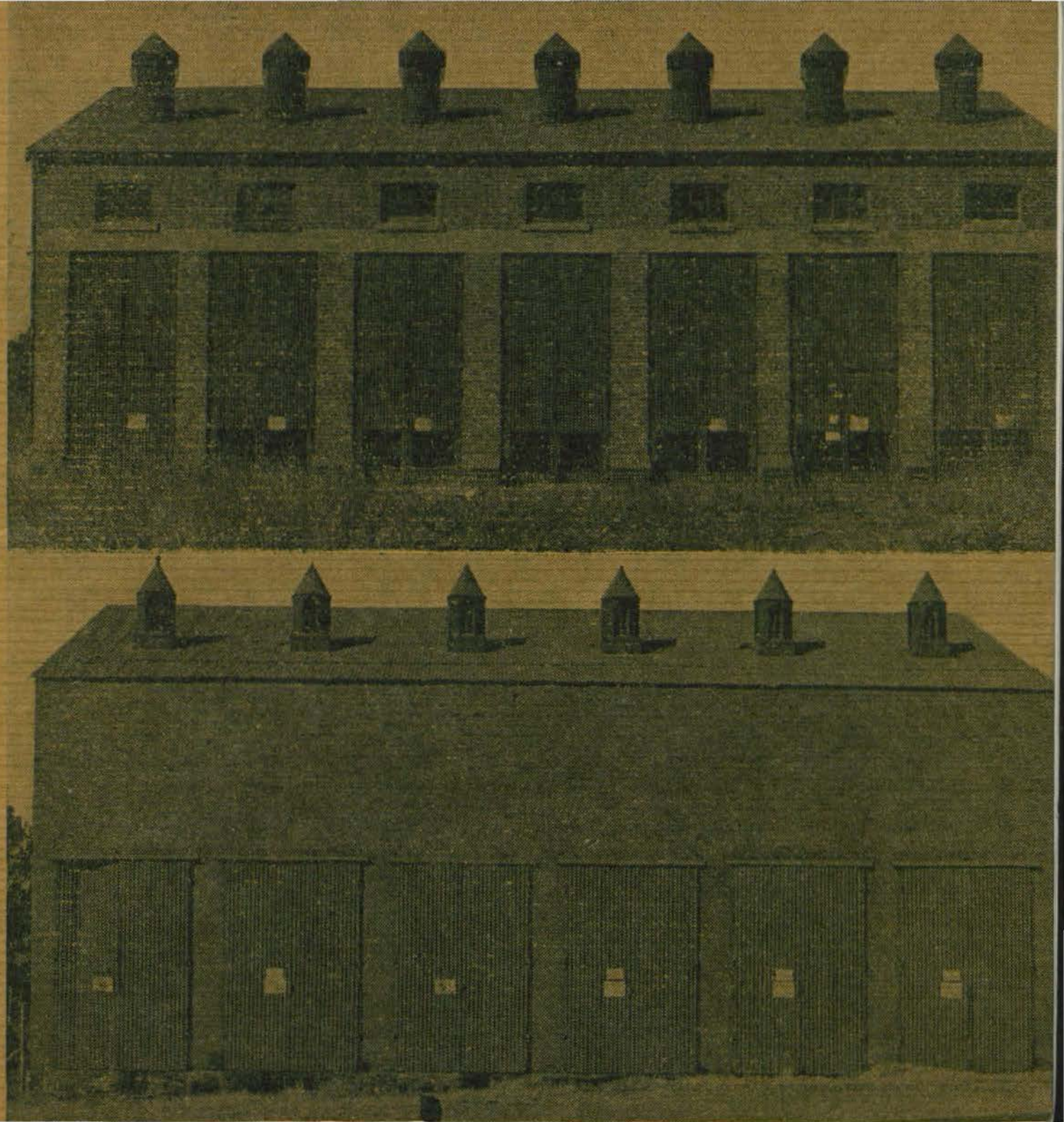


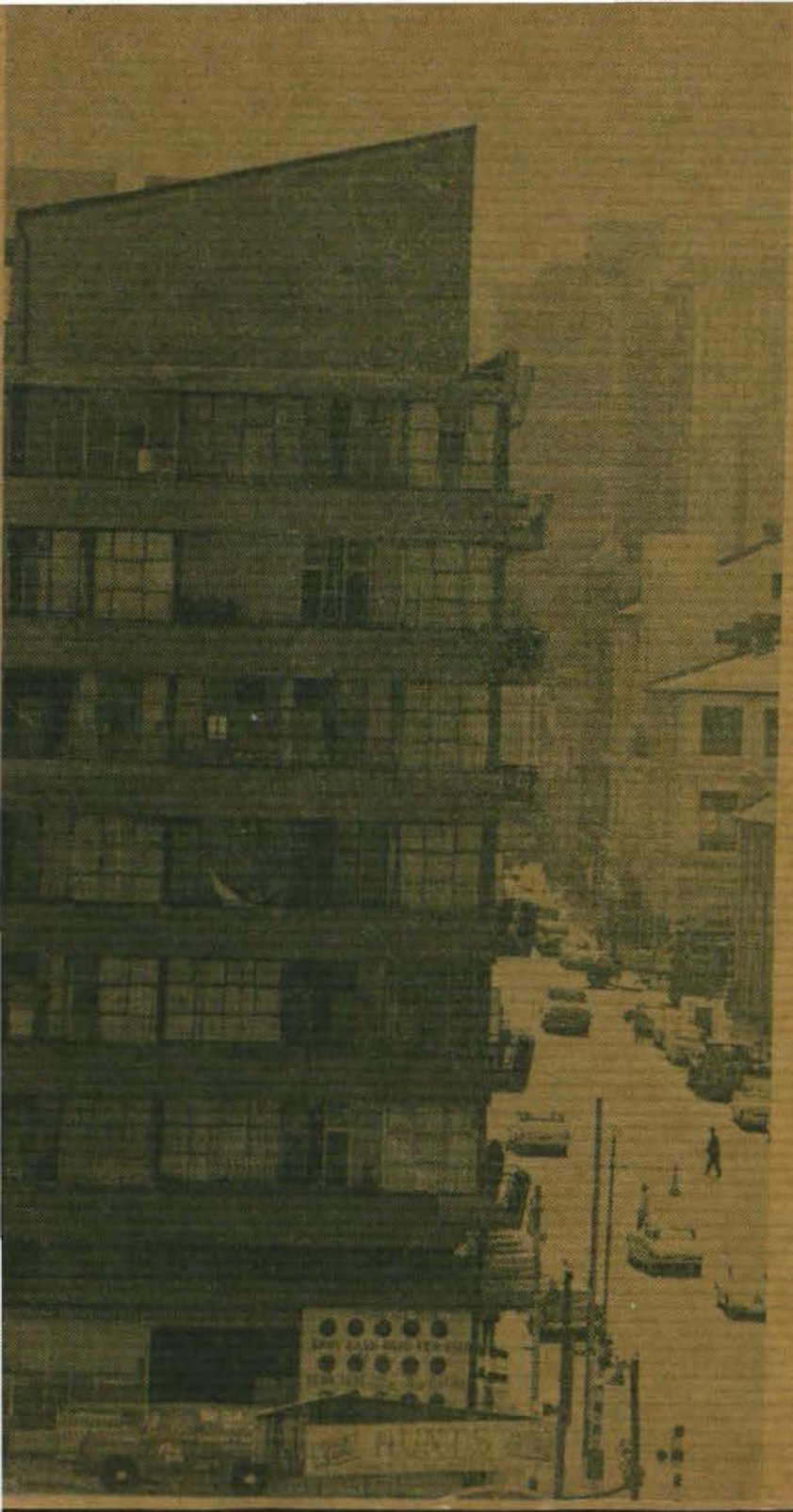
POWERHOUSES IN THE JOHANNESBURG AREA



We decline to accept architecture as the complacent perpetuation of standards and concepts that are no longer valid. Shining ultimate certainties, tidy circumscribed schools of thought, smug bodies of self-contained beliefs, exclusive systems of personal dissolution, hot-housed academic precepts, we reject as the meaningless paraphernalia of an approach to design that has become trite, automatic, inauthentic and deprived of the dignity that comes from realising the urgency of circumstance and occasion. By not taking into account man's fundamental requirements, demands and expectations, contemporary architecture betrays its roots, and forces us to come to terms with the implications of its original message. This exhibition is an expression of our search for a way in which we can, with conviction, face a situation deprived of a centre and a living purpose. In the buildings presented in this exhibition we find the evidence of a way of building that has not lost contact with the basic facts and mysteries of daily life. From them we gain the courage to consciously reflect this reality, and to confront man who lives from day to day with a truer picture of his present condition. For this we must be capable, above all, of a lucidity unafraid of controlling what the imagination might discover. Adequacy of means, relevance of purpose, pertinacity of decision, are the implements with which we propose to shatter the senseless vocabulary that has grown among us – in order to study grammar anew. Students of architecture, Witwatersrand. September, 1962.

POWERHOUSES IN THE JOHANNESBURG AREA





STUDENTS' EXHIBITION 1962

PATRICK JONES

When architecture becomes a process of regurgitating worn ideas and lacks both enthusiasm and direction; when the designer's frantic desire for security becomes manifest in every new building, a student is forced to question his attitude and approach to architecture and to reassess his position in relation to the present and the immediate past — in this way he participates more actively in his own environment. In 1962 a group of architectural students of the University of the Witwatersrand felt it imperative to state their point of view towards architecture today. This led to an exhibition in September, which was designed to replace ideas rather than to criticise destructively. The task, once embarked upon, became an enormous project, as it was found that it is easier to criticise than to recreate. All the principles which the students held synonymous with architecture would have to be embodied in their statement.

The research began with the study of buildings in and around Johannesburg by a small group of students. They became increasingly aware of the potentialities of the material at hand. Simultaneously came the realization of the amount of work involved if the material was to be presented adequately.

Seminars were held to discuss the implications of the exhibition. Gradually, suggestions and contributions were accumulated from students acting either as individuals or as small groups, working in conjunction with one another. The entire Reef and Johannesburg areas were thoroughly investigated and all significant buildings were examined in detail and photographed.

At this stage, buildings with a very definite regional quality could be discerned; for example, power houses, mining and industrial structures, which showed a direct translation of their specific needs dictating their forms. The tough quality inherent in buildings like power houses, complemented their stark mine dump environment. The work, which

reflected the movement of the 'thirties, was also studied to assess how it had withstood the demands of man, climatic conditions and a growing city. Deniston Court, a block of flats in the city centre, showed many of the qualities which had become significant to the students during their examination of other buildings. It had weathered man and his impositions with dignity. Soffits of balconies and window frames had been painted different colours by successive tenants; washing hung from the balconies and the natural corrosion of the elements bore evidence of the building's ability to cope with its human occupants.

Backs of buildings became more important than their fronts. This was a significant factor in the subsequent research, as it gave evidence of the designer's self-concious desire to create beauty on a facade.

The backs, which were never intended to be seen, lacked this inhibiting limitation. Here an expression of the whole mechanism of the building became apparent.

Hundreds of photographs were collected, of which only pertinent examples were selected for display. From these it was decided that the exhibition should present visual images in conjunction with a manifesto clearly stating the students' aims, instead of a lengthy explanation of each photograph. The observer was left to draw his own conclusions. The exhibition was more a posing of a question than a formulating of a new vernacular.

The exhibition was presented in the foyer of the John Moffat Building at the University of the Witwatersrand. Thirteen tons of $1\frac{1}{2}$" diameter aluminium and steel scaffold piping grew out of the oval stairwell. The pipes were joined with standard pink coupling units, forming a continuity of spaces in the foyer, which then spilled out of the large glass windows on the east facade into the reflecting pool outside. The photographs and standard corrugated iron sheets, some of which were faced with copies of the manifesto, were placed in spaces formed by the scaffolding, presenting a total image derived from the spontaneous character of the subject matter.

For the students involved the exhibition entailed valuable research which bore evidence of clarity of thought, imagination and endeavour, manifested in the buildings. This served to clarify views and illustrated an approach to building both representative of its particular environment and the solution to its problems.



COMMENTS

"In the buildings presented in this exhibition we find evidence of a way of building that has not lost contact with the basic facts and mysteries of daily life".

Tough, direct buildings, in brutal landscapes: where do we go from here?

Cities and townships beg for quiet, for places of escape, for gentle homes and protected gardens.

To achieve them needs a more submissive courage than was required in those frontier days. A more boring sort of social engagement, and a special sort of stamina for dealing with slow changing things — for cities are difficult to change once they are already grown.

In a sort of way, to get back to that directness again, one has to reach another organisational plateau, on which the complexity of cities is normal to the processes of architectural form-thought.

Not even Swedes can think like this yet.

Your next exhibition must be of things which actually seem to work in the present situation.

I don't need jolting, I need help.

Peter Smithson.

* * * *

Thanks for all the material and subsequent cable. I read the brown paper manifesto and had my fill of the involuntary poetry of the buildings on the photographs.

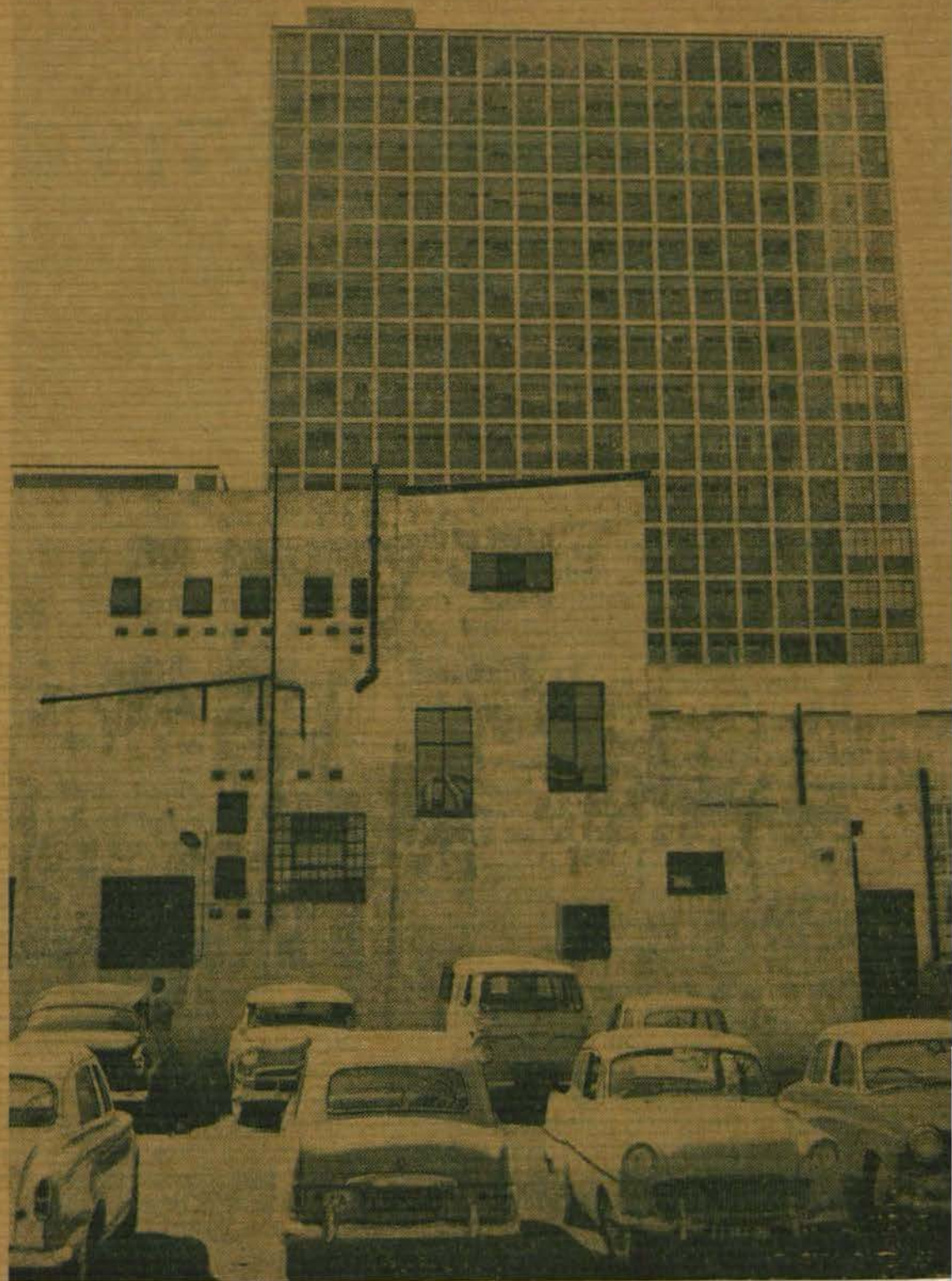
My question is: does the manifesto link up directly with these photographs? Where the manifesto refers to "the buildings presented in this exhibition we find the evidence of a way of building that has not lost contact . . . etc etc", are those on the photographs the ones you mean? I'm not clear on that point. It is of course rather difficult for me to discuss your Witwatersrand area study. I can, however, send you a few rather short and axiomatic pieces I have written recently.

Are there not matters that must be tackled which precede planning and architecture? I think so.

My statements: "If society has no form how can we build its counter-form?" and: "When we say city we should imply those that live and not just abstract population," imply that we work for *all men* or *no man*. Since we — you, all of us — unhappily *do not* work for all men (in spirit) we inevitably work for *no man*. As long as we keep doing that, as long as we keep working for *no man* rather than all men there is no real sound reason why "we should decline to accept architecture as the complacent perpetuation of standards and concepts that are no longer valid etc" (see manifesto you sent to me). Twelve years ago I wrote roughly the same thing: *Today the architect is the ally of all men or no man — or he is not an architect at all.*

The city is the home of a reasonably integrated lot or it is not a city — not a living city at least. Our choice was made when we chose to become architects!!!!! that's it, that's the truth. *Space is the appreciation of it.* It is never *space for one and solid for another.* Doors never evilly select — they gather.

A. van Eyck.



WESTERN NATIVE TOWNSHIP

Its Significance and Potential

E. W. N. MALLOWS

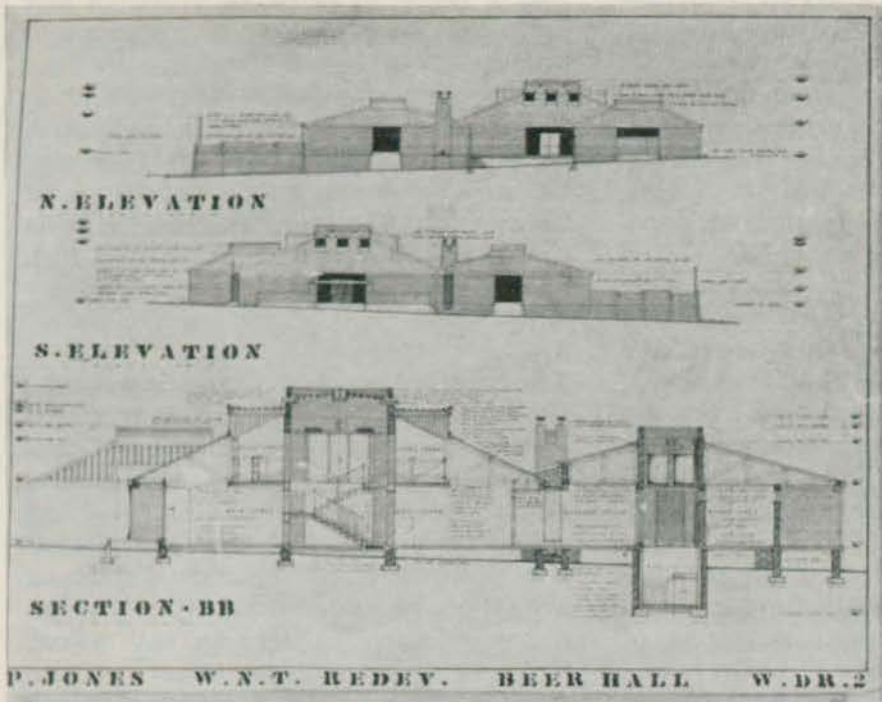
"We are here," Mies van der Rohe is said to have said somewhere, "to solve problems": and presumably the converse is equally true, that problems are here to make us solve them. Whichever way one looks at it, the interest in life consists in finding them; or rather, not so much in finding as in selecting the right kind of problems to solve. For on the selection of what one does, in the direction in which one's effort is expended, half at least of the value of our lives depend. The hotter the potato, the more rewarding is the handling; the harder the discipline, the better the experience.

If one wants to know a strange town quickly, then ask to see the slums first. For here you will see all the problems in their most concentrated form: here you will see the inverted image of the place, painted in miniature and with violent colours; here you can taste at once the strongest flavour and the hottest spice.

But the real significance of the slum — in fact what makes it a slum — is the significance of the flow of time. A place where poor people live is not a slum: it may be untidy, it may be bone-poor, but it may still house a proud and coherent community. What dissolves it into a slum is the suggestion to its inhabitants that it is time to move into another place. Then slum conditions start. Then the people lose heart and defection snowballs: rents are not paid, buildings are not maintained, painting is never seen.

This is simply growth and change in an acute and painful form, when the old is not yet dead and the new not yet born. It is here that the planner and the designer is most needed, to help ease the death of the old and create with imaginative foresight the pattern of the new. "Putrescence" as was said once to the writer by a friend long ago as we gazed contemplatively at a manure heap in an old farmyard, "Putrescence is the essence of growth": and there are few remarks that carry so much truth.

Western Native Township is a prime example of all these aspects of planning — in its coherence and colourful expression when untouched; in its rapid decay when shaken by legislative decree; and in its acute challenge to the designer — architect or planner, economist or sociologist — as the change-over proceeds. The more so, to any student: for faced with the future as their prime concern they naturally are more acutely aware of the challenge and the implication for their lives. Therefore for any student, anytime, anywhere, hot potatoes are a "natural". These are the challenges that develop the muscles of the mind and spirit and without which no training can reach its maximum, no student be fully extended, strung to the utmost of his abilities and resources. It is not the practicality of such a problem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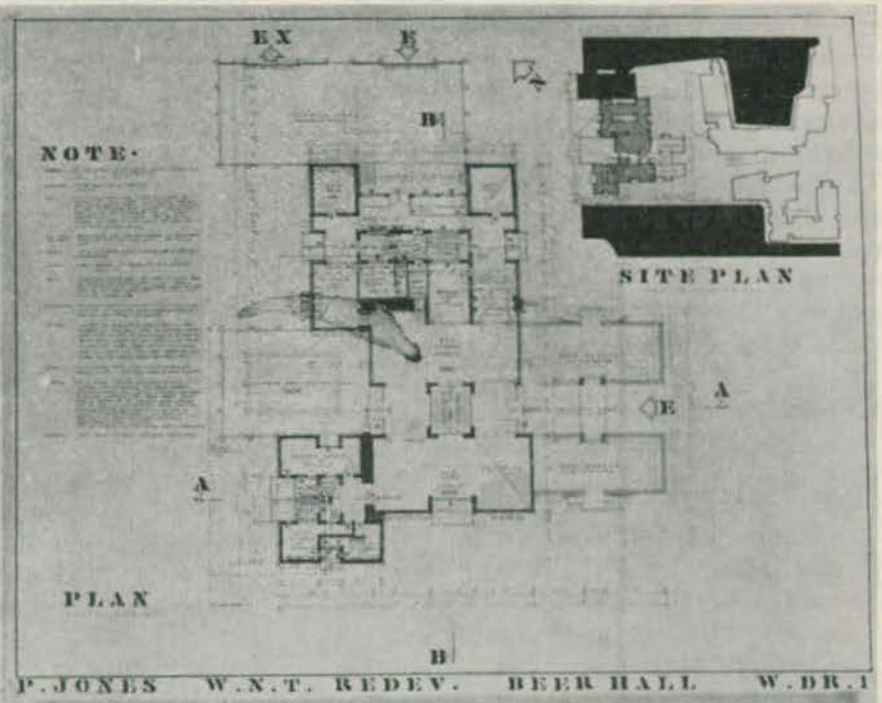
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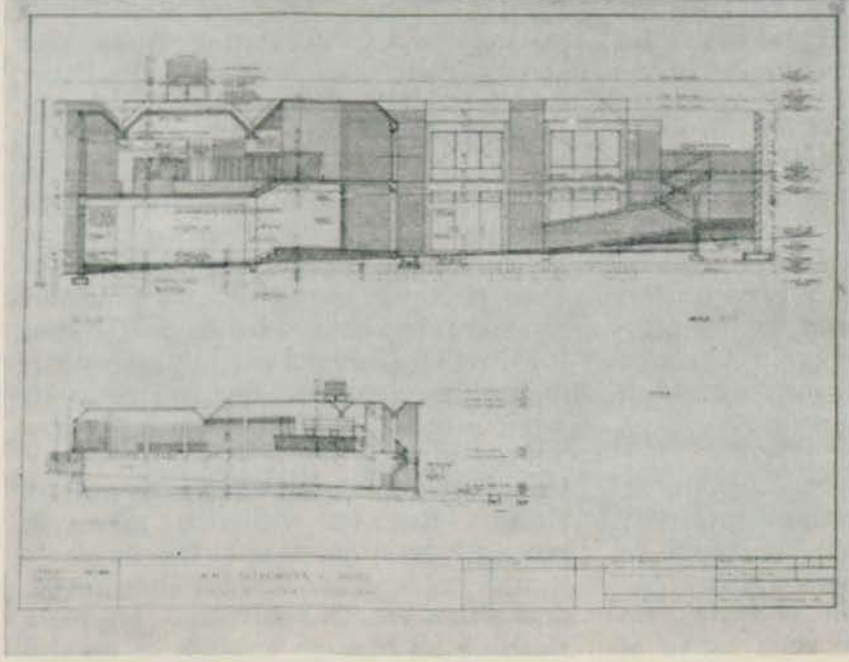
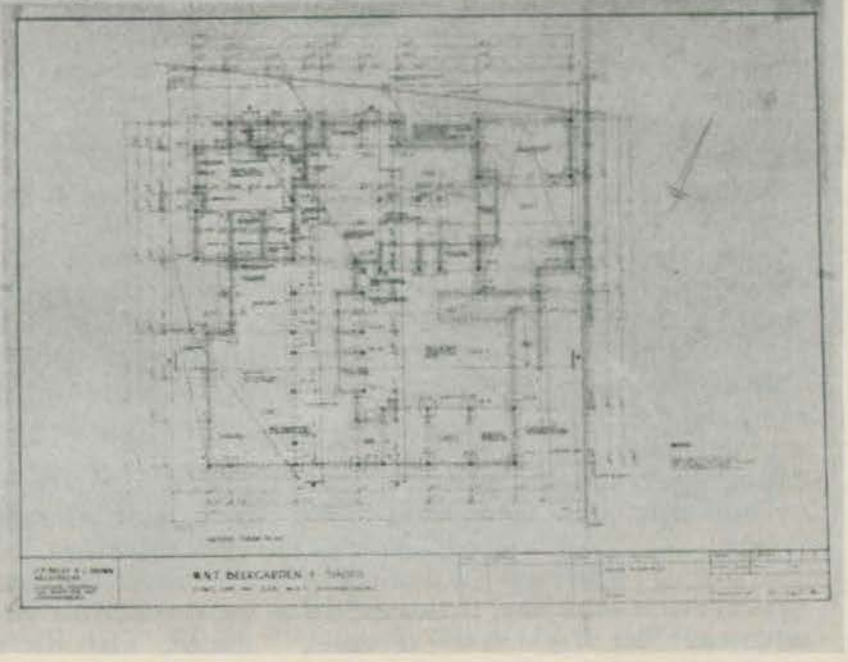




that gives it such strong academic validity, but rather the reverse — namely that severe intellectual and spiritual challenge it presents to the eternal objectives of youth to make a better world.
The actual project as carried out by the third-year students in 1963 to my mind amply proved the correctness of the choice, and perhaps four aspects can be isolated as suggested validity tests for future projects.

1. The project must represent an acute, or at least a difficult, challenge. If there is no difficulty there is no enthusiasm, no reaction, no concentration of response. On the other hand it should be not completely overwhelming. This is a perfect illustration of Toynbee's theory of history — the theory of challenge and response, where the challenge must be enough to extend but not enough to overwhelm the challenger.

2. The project must be capable of accurate definition in its total context. This means in fact people who know what they are talking about must be available to guide and discuss the projects as it proceeds and hold themselves reasonably available to students when required. In this project W.N.T. seemed exceptionally lucky: the experts were both available and enthusiastic.

3. The project must have a quality of reality: that is to say, it must deal with a subject of which the student, explicitly or implicity, has had some experience and can emotionally participate. It should also permit him to inspect the actual locality concerned, the total environment, natural and man-made, of the project. (This means in fact the site should be well-mapped: and this is not so common as might be assumed).

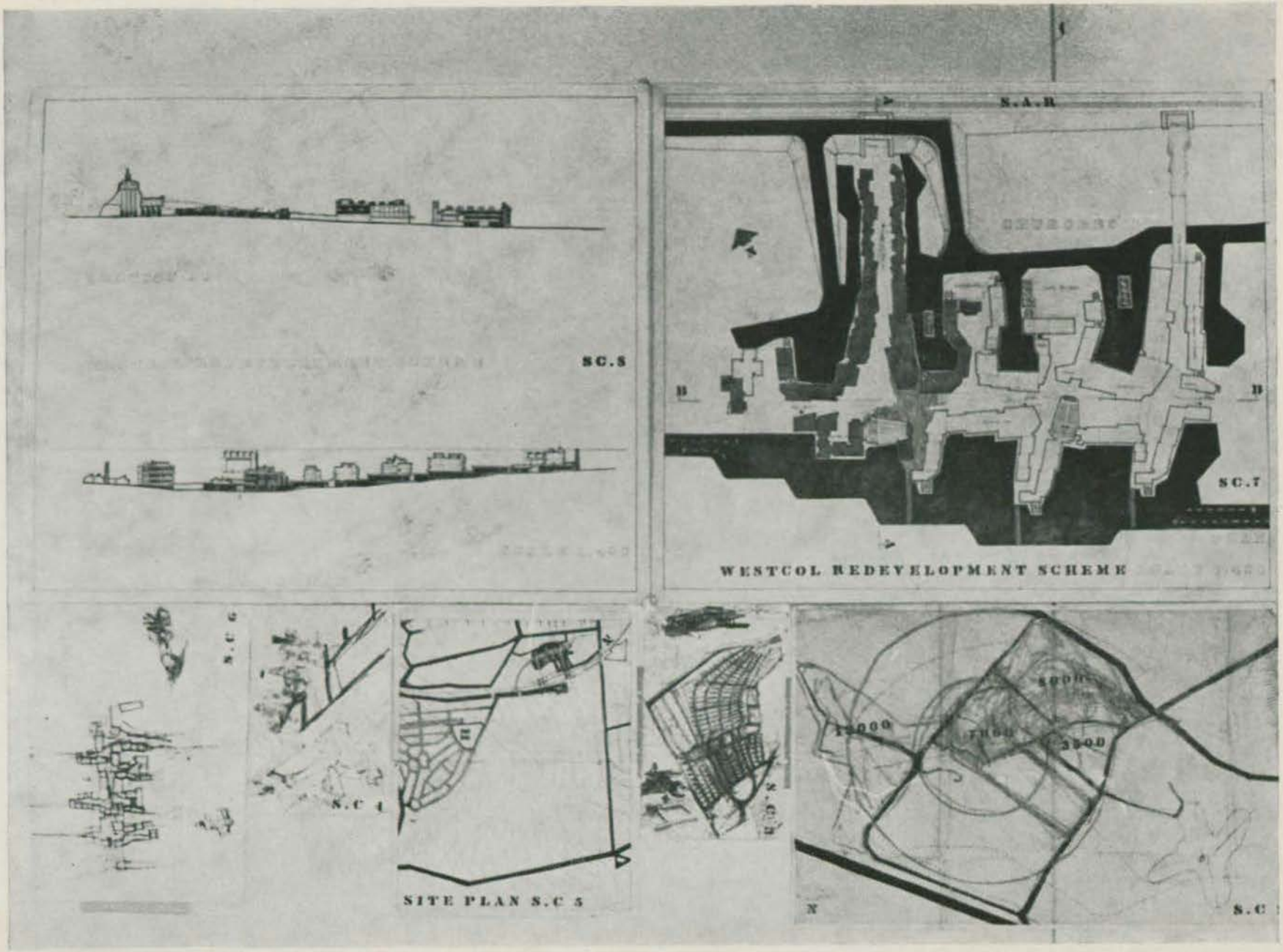
4. The project increases in stature and interest if it can provide a framework of reference for several sub-projects. This teaches the art and science of inter-relationships of part with part, of the part with the whole and the nature of construction of wholes. These problems lie at the root of all conceptual thinking and are fundamental to mental training. A sense of proportion, a sense of scale is not limited to visual matters only: it is rooted in life itself and has to be trained as much as any other faculty.

The actual results in the writer's opinion justified the above remarks. The response to the challenge was of a high order and was due at least in part to the application of some of the above principles. Above all, no punches were pulled, the full story was given, ample site visits made, and full documentation was provided.

The designs themselves, in general, were remarkable for their intensity of application, in their insistence in applying completely new approaches to the problem: often at times, no doubt, with disregard to a sense of scale or proportion. At times they had a sense of positive violence but even the most violent had a sense of humanity: a sense that the human component was fundamental and in the end man is still the measure. Certainly it is time our environmental skills showed some tendency to return to the humanities, in this present world of increasingly skilful, and powerful, technological barbarisms.

The preference for sharp contrasts, shown in most of the designs was also interesting, both visually and conceptually — between high and low densities, between pedestrian and vehicular traffic, between nodal centres of movement and dispersed areas where movement slowly originates — such things, to my mind, show a greater awareness of the need for strong design, of pleasure in strong forms, in strong light and shade, solid and void, all qualities which old Alberti would have warmly welcomed as "voluptas".

If the next generation of designers can live up to their principles in action as much as they show it in their thought, then the future human environment should be in good shape, for it will be infused with the strength of the imagination. For to live in an environment untouched with the imagination is a living death and the imagination is essentially a violent thing. But its violence gives it strength to endure: that is why one's maddest ideas are always the sanest, and alone worth realising. There is nothing else tough enough to do the job.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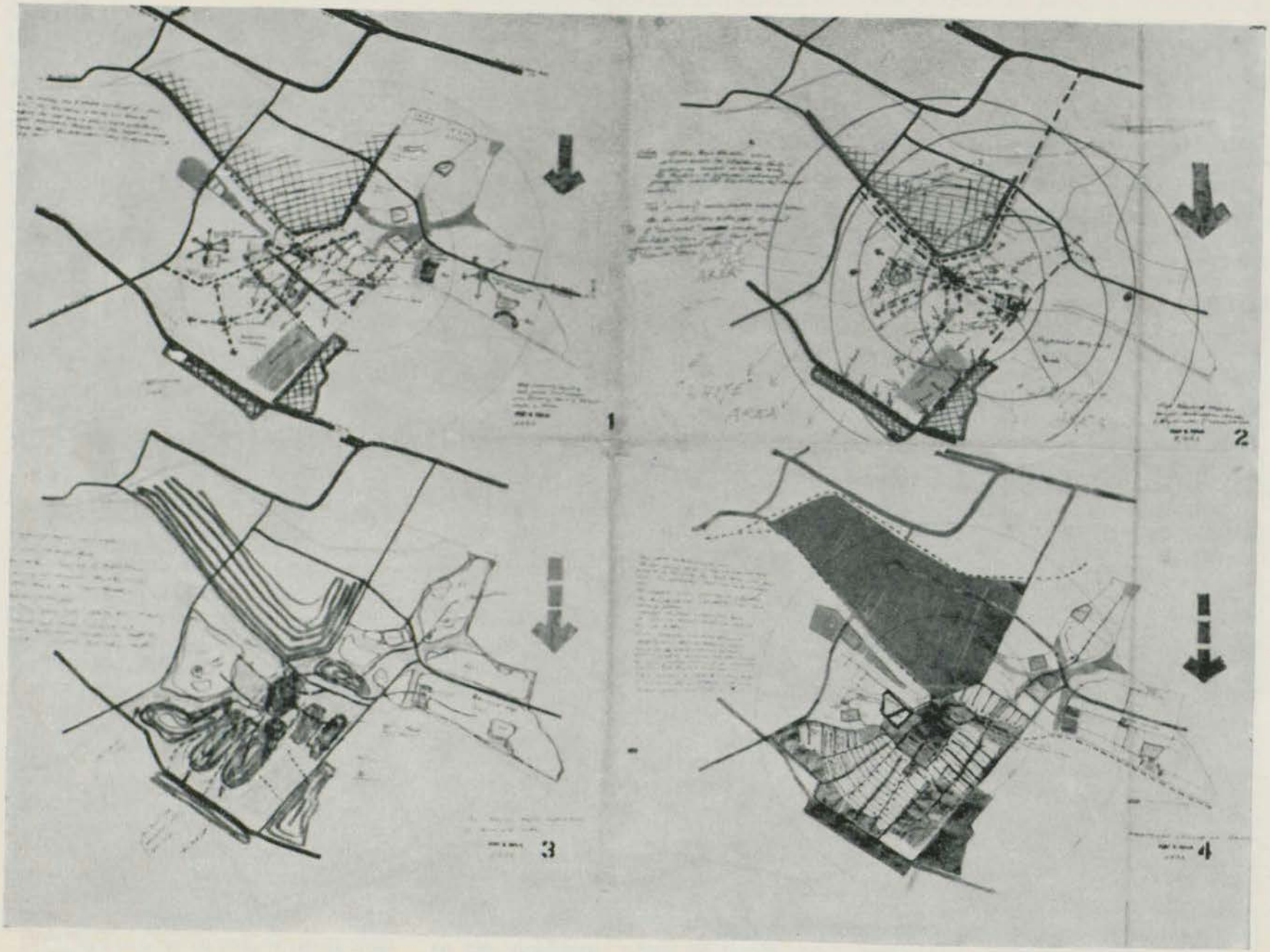
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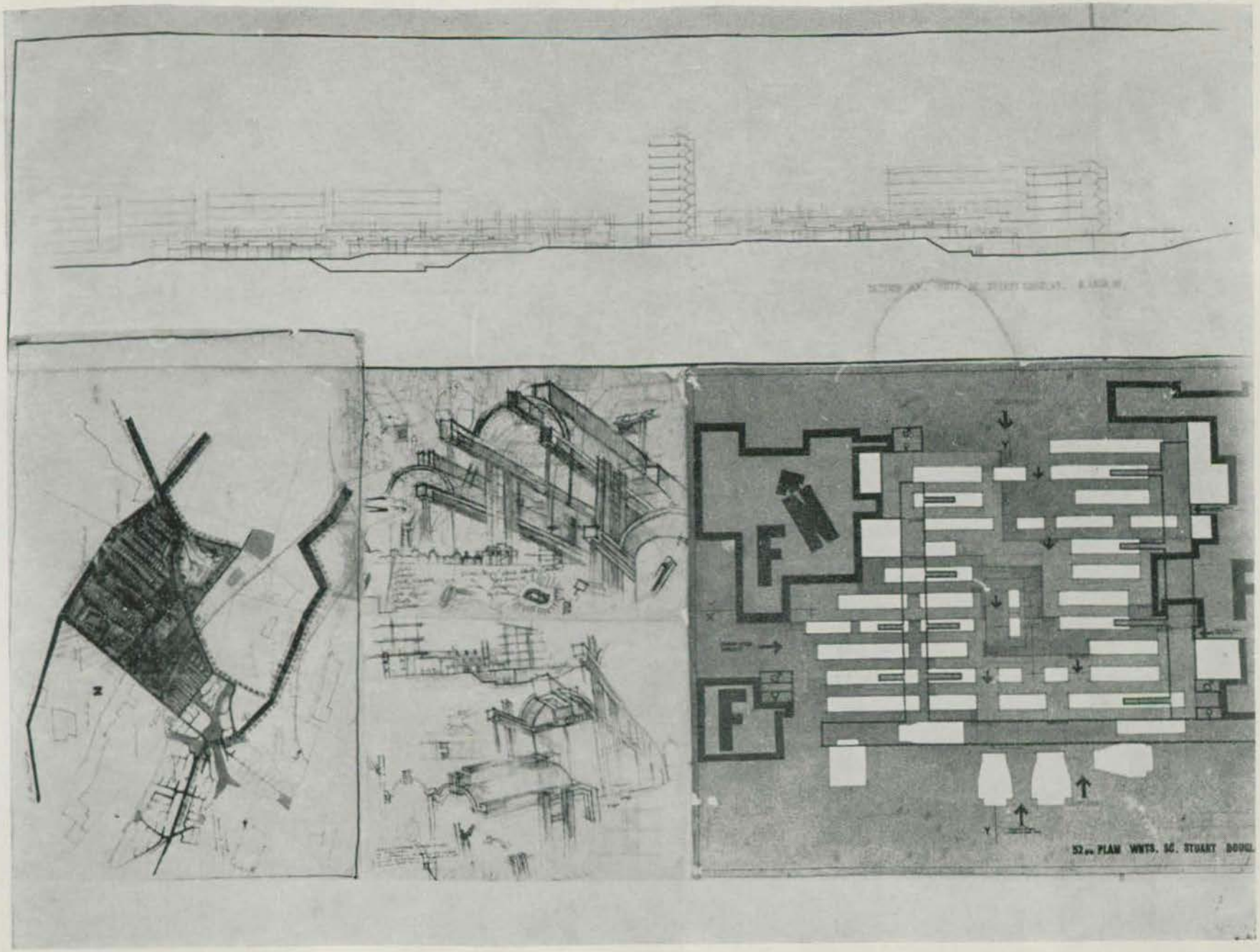
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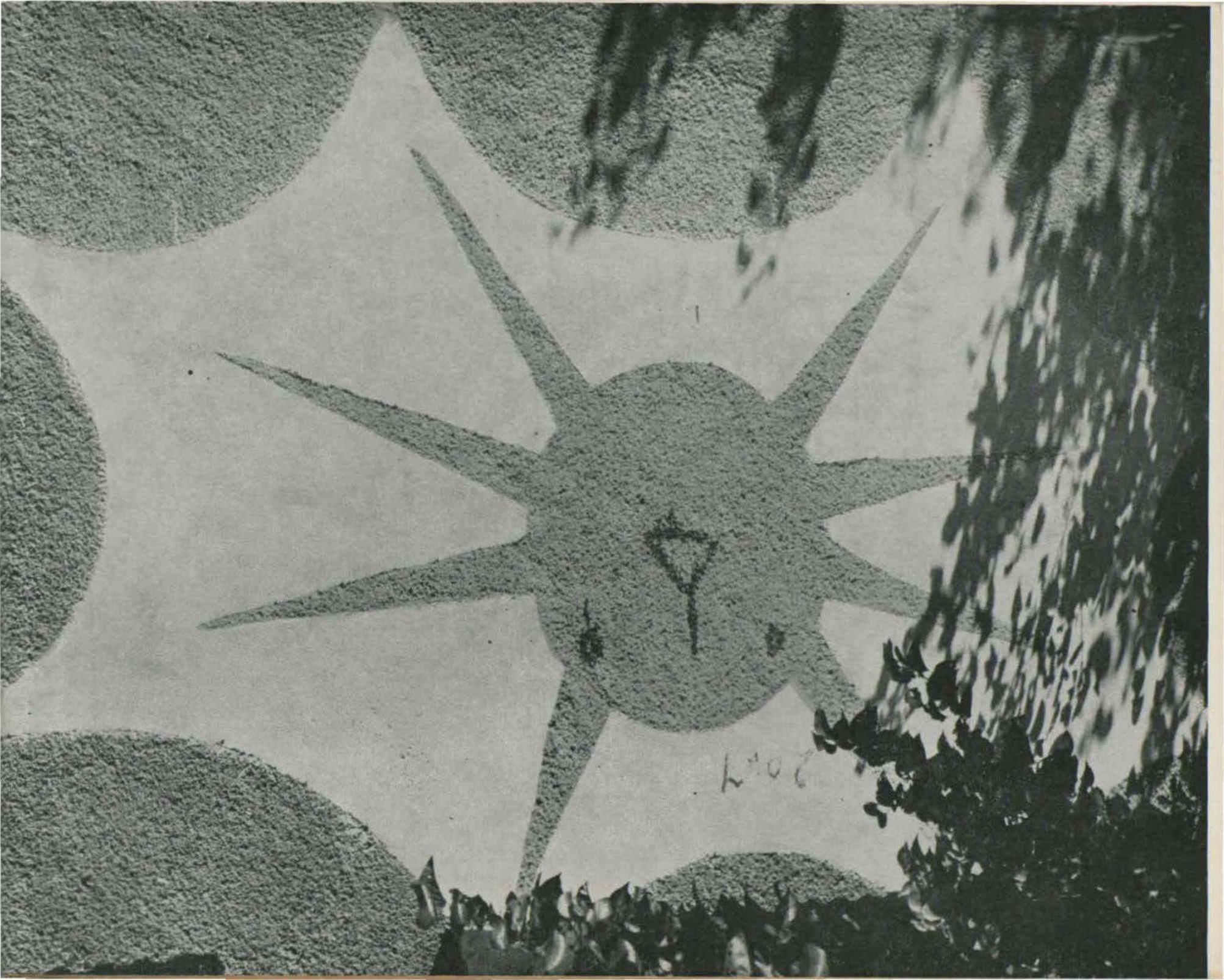


A TALE OF TWO CITIES AND THE STORY OF A COMMUNITY

JULIAN BEINART

To begin with, this is a tale of two cities. Both are Johannesburg. One city is JHBG 1 and in it live people of all colours, very rich and very poor. The other city is JHBG 2 and in it all are of one colour, all poor.

JHBG 1 is like most cities: half a million people on 90 sprawling square miles, neonlight dense in the centre, streetlight thin on the outside. JHBG 2 is unlike any other city: half a million people on 26 square miles of dark sameness, 28 people on every acre for 17000 acres.

Our twin cities are Siamese twins but unlike other twin cities who hold hands, often across a river, our cities shun each other across a mile of minedump space. Interchange is one-sided. All the people of JHBG 2 cross the gap because they need and want to come to JHBG 1. Perhaps 5% of JHBG 1 — bona fide inquisitives and functionaries armed with permits — return the visits.

This is our Johannesburg. No use giving one of the cities another name and forgetting about it. It is still there, not an exurb, not a suburb, but a city, a dormitory, asleep. These are our cities. Apart each dies its own kind of death; one day together again, who knows what it will be?

* * *

This is also the story of a community. Once upon a time Johannesburg was one city and the community of our story was five miles from the city's centre. Unlike its ugly brothers and sisters it had a dull name: Western Native Township.

Inside its iron wall, 2000 houses packed eight feet apart. In this grid-iron camp, each house had two rooms and an open porch: 400 sq. ft. for a family. Houses were born and then rented with no floors, no ceilings, no plaster, no fences, no gardens, no waterborn sewage, no water supply, no electricity.

But people came and liked living there. It was near town and that was most important to them. It was cheap and transport was easy. It was near many kinds of shops, a hospital, cinemas, a swimming pool—near also to shebeens and Sophiatown. It was small and they could walk in it.

And because they liked being there, they made it a better place in which to be. They built gardens with trees, pergolas, hedges and courtyards. They built gates to announce the entrances and numbers of their houses. And they changed their houses. To make more space they enclosed the open porch and in doing so, produced solid facades facing the street, each 22 ft. by 7 ft. high. And then to make their houses more beautiful they decorated these street-facing rectangles. Someone started and soon many were doing it. Families of decorations appeared: rising suns, circular blobs, indented rectangles, razor blades, diamonds, quoins. And eccentric shapes as well: smiling faces, trees of life. Colours of every kind, textures rough as gravel, others smooth as plaster.

And to keep their world this way they organised themselves. Ways of controlling the young, of stopping the dirtying of streets. Organisations for amusement, political parties, shebeens, stokfels, St. John's brigade.

Given the pall of an army camp, they gave it a smiling face. Each man was himself and so each house was itself. Each street was a collection of individuals, variations on a basic rectangle order.

Slums occur when pressure to capitulate is greater than resistance to improve. Then people turn away, inwards, and their houses turn away with them. WNT was a community of resistance. Its people looked upwards, and their houses looked outwards. For forty years they smiled at each other, house to house, and



house to people. And then the people were moved away and the community died.

* * *

And so we come back to the tale of our two cities. For two cities meant the death of one community: its resistance, its face and its smiles. Communities are valuable, as valuable as life. Shall we always have cities which destroy communities or shall we construct communities and so build cities?

W N T

Born 1920 Died 1962

R I P

WNT was a place of understanding, cohesion. That is why we used to call it "Thulandisville." The city council used to respond without delay to the pleas and demands WNT residents made. It is because of this that WNT earned itself this name which literally means "O.K. I heard you." We had all the things any community could want — a library, shopping centre, community hall, playgrounds and sportsfield and our famous real avenue — "Roberts Avenue" flanked by trees — it was a favourite for lovers especially on Sunday afternoons.

The place was small enough to allow and encourage visiting, a thing that has disappeared here in Moroka.
WNT was a fine place. We were a happy and tribeless community. We were happily mixed — Zulus, Xhosas, Sotho, Tswana — the lot. To crown it all we got on very well with Chinese and Coloured in Newclare where we

used to do most of our shopping. For instance I got married to a man from Nyasaland. My daughter got married to a Zulu. That's WNT. Today we are separated. There is ethnic grouping.

WNT was a lovely place. The beer hall was not far from the location and the beer used to sell like hot cakes. My friends were within easy reach. So was town.

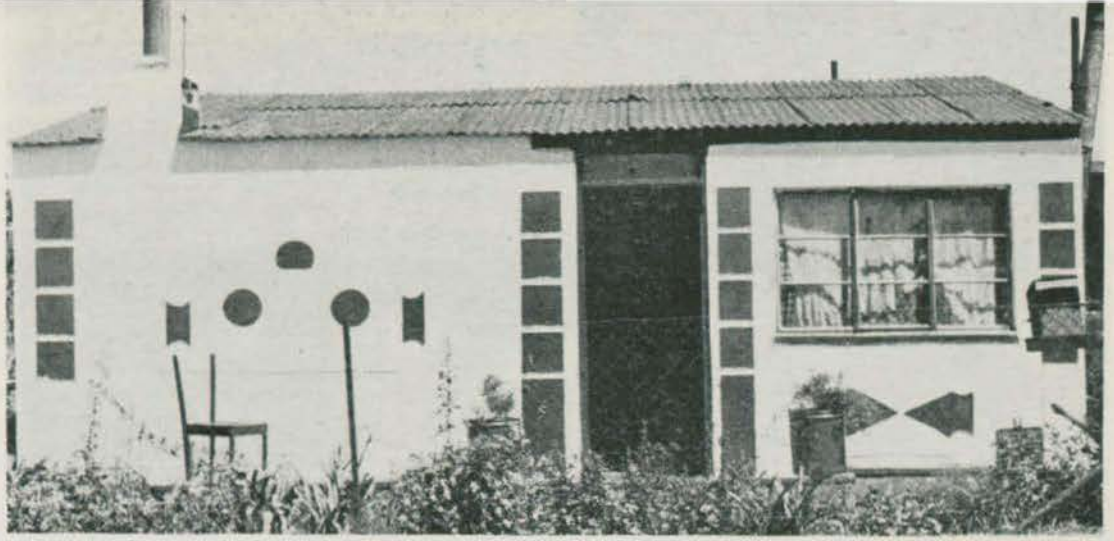
I came to Johannesburg in 1929. I had lived in a big house with all the amenities one can think of. When I landed in Johburg I got the shock of my life. I could not understand how people could live, sleep and eat in the same house. But after 33 years I suppose I am used to it now. Since the majority of the people have left WNT all that is gone. These were gay people. They were tidy as well. Today, WNT is filthy. The coloureds do not know what the drain has to be used for. They litter and garbage the streets. Oh! such filth. I think of a butterfly when I look at my design. It's a beauty.

It will be a sort of heirloom. We would like to pass it from generation to generation.

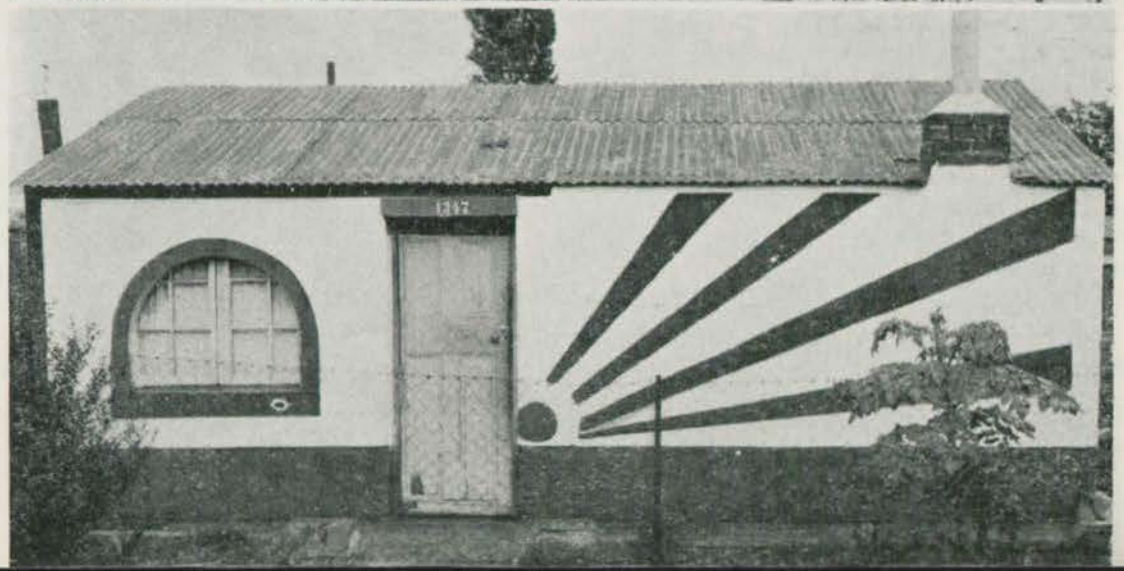
The neighbours used to call at my house to find out where I had got the bright idea — design. But I did not tell them — I did not want them to copy from me. They admired the pattern.

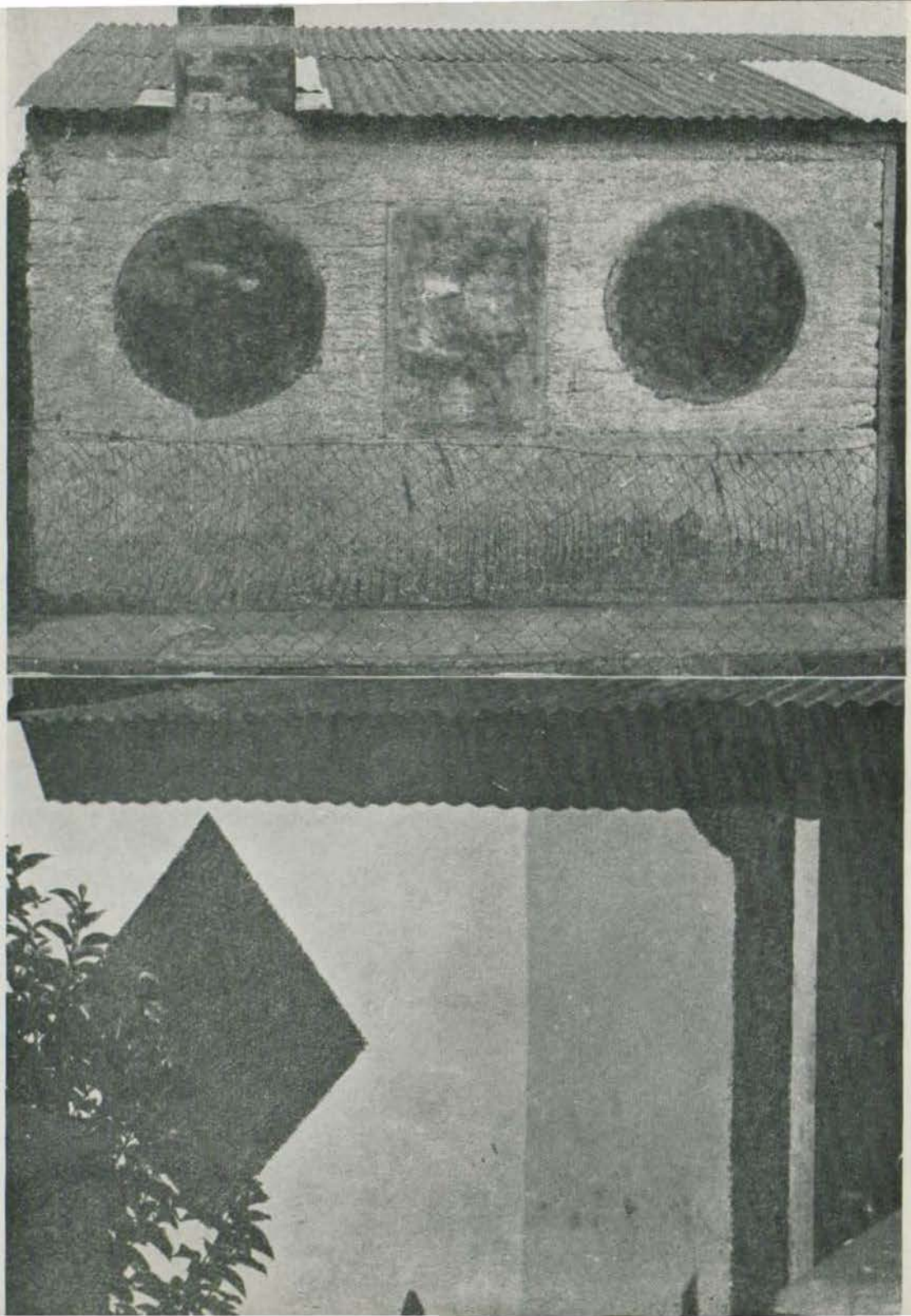
I wanted to be different from the other people in WNT. In addition, I liked the design.

Now the design makes me think of tombstones and graveyards. It is a memorial now because WNT is dead.









No-one in WNT had used the colour combination I wanted to use. In fact, I saw the colour combination on a kiddie's house — a doll house.

The book in which I saw the design was brought home by my husband who works at Whitehall Court, Killarney. Actually the designs were holes in an unoccupied house as depicted in that magazine. The house, we thought, was incomplete because the scaffolding was still there.

It just came. I did not even think about it. I thought about it when it had already been done.

It reminds me of happiness, because it made my house attractive and it meant and stood for what I could do. I wanted a rough texture from the stone work because I believed the stone would hold the soil together, and make the wall withstand rain and scourging sun rays.

As a young girl my mother taught me various tribal designs . . . my mother believed that it was an indispensable facet of my broader education. It has no significant meaning for me. It is merely decorative.

The design had a diamond shaped motif. In order to have more space, the verandah was converted into a kitchen. The greater portion of the extension consisted of corrugated-iron. The material was bought at a second-hand building material dealer in Sophiatown. Above the corrugated structure was a window which occupied the central position. Because of the smallness of the kitchen, ventilation was a real prob-

lem. To solve this problem, thin pieces of wood were used horizontally and vertically above the corrugated iron base. A window would have been cumbersome and inconvenient for passersby — the kitchen and street were separated by a fence. Therefore, canvas which could be folded and unfolded — like those you find in shop dressing windows — was used. There were three such canvases. The central position — "the window" — had a piece of canvas just above, and the two ventilated areas sandwiching the "window" also had strips of canvas. The three strips of canvas had three different colours — blue, white and red. The ventilation area was painted red and the diamond shapes built into it were painted white.

I saw these designs from a neighbour about four or six houses away in WNT.

The front view is important. If we decorated the other walls passersby would not be able to see the decorations.

We did not have money for interior decoration. Besides, it was not customary to decorate inside walls.
The design reminds me of two things: cyprus trees and the insignia of a diamond card.

The block of houses in which I live drew a lot from my designs. They asked the Xhosa man who did my wall to decorate theirs as well. We used to call the decorator "Nyoza" as we did not know his real name. Poor thing — dead now.

The houses were the same in WNT — shape and size. I wanted mine to be different. This would leave my children with a memory of the house in which they were born.

The builder wanted me to accept a design with a sunrise motif but I declined. I wanted something different and simple. When he showed me his subsequent design, I accepted. I can't say how much I paid for the front wall design. The builder charged me £22 for plastering the walls, interior and exterior, and for the design.

The design meant nothing. I did not want it to have a meaning. I just felt like doing it.

Today the design reminds me of all the money I spent on it.
Today the design reminds me of a place I had come to call my home; and it gives me a deep longing for my friends.

The circle is a typical European art form. They will like our home design for this reason. Many things the whites do are based on the shape of a circle. The ash-tray you are now using; the wheel, the watch.

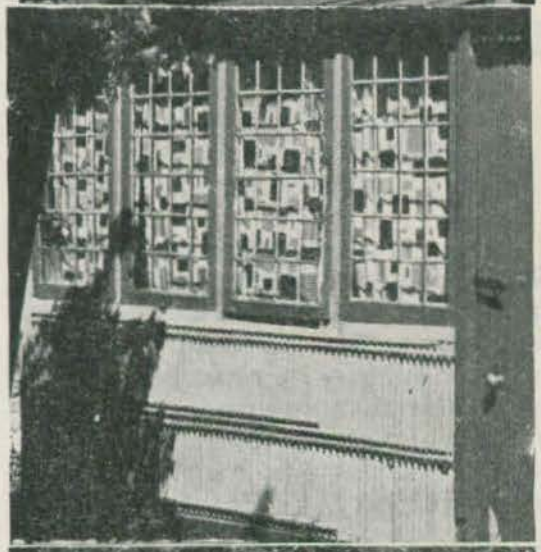
The design reminds me of a Christmas tree. But when looking at it now, I think of a tombstone.

The neighbours liked the design, but they wanted to beat me. They wanted to produce something better than what I had done.

The design reminds me of my brother who is pretty scarce these days. I haven't seen him for three years.

The design makes me appreciate the beauty of art.







BEYOND VISIBILITY

ABOUT PLACE AND OCCASION, THE INBETWEEN REALM AND LABYRINTHIAN CLARITY

ALDO VAN EYCK

Space has no room, time not a moment for man. He is excluded. In order to 'include' him — help his homecoming — he must be gathered into their meaning (man is both the subject and object of architecture).

WHATEVER SPACE AND TIME MEAN, PLACE AND OCCASION MEAN MORE.

FOR SPACE IN THE IMAGE OF MAN IS PLACE AND TIME IN THE IMAGE OF MAN IS OCCASION.

Today space and what it should coincide with in order to become 'space' — man at home with himself — are lost. Both search for the same place, but cannot find it.

PROVIDE THAT PLACE.

Is man able to penetrate the materials he organises into hard shape between one man and another, between what is here and what is there, between this and the following moment? Is he able to find the right place for the right occasion? Is he permitted to tarry?

NO. So start with this: make
a welcome of each door,
and a countenance of each
window.

Make of each a place, a bunch of places of each house and each city,

FOR A HOUSE IS A TINY CITY, A CITY A HUGE HOUSE.

Get closer to the centre of human reality and build its counterform — for each man and all men (today the architect is the ally of everyman or no man).

Whoever attempts to solve the riddle of space in the abstract will construct the outline of emptiness and call it space.

Whoever attempts to meet man in the abstract will speak with his echo and call this a dialogue.

MAN STILL BREATHES BOTH IN AND OUT, WHEN IS ARCHITECTURE GOING TO DO THE SAME?

When it does watch the thin lines — those narrow borderlines — loop

into the places people need; watch how they are persuaded to loop generously into a tiny-huge.

INBETWEEN REALM

It is with this in mind that I venture to call architecture

BUILT HOMECOMING

Switch on the stars before the fuses go!

"open up the window and let the foul air out"

The breathing image epitomises my conception of twin phenomena. We cannot breathe only one way — either in or either out. As to what Jelly Roll cried: which window and what foul air? The 'window' is relativity and the 'foul air' . . . . well, it is what exudes from the aggressive halves into which twin phenomena are brutally split by some disease of the mind which, in our particular society, has been devoutly cultivated.

I am concerned with twin phenomena, with unity and diversity; part and whole; small and large; many and few; simplicity and complexity; change and constancy; movement and rest; open and closed; inside and outside — with why they too are ignobly halved and the halves hollowed out, and why they are withheld from opening the windows of the mind. As abstract antonyms the halves are rendered meaningless — hideous. If they are allowed to materialise into house or city cruelty oozes from their hollowness. For in such houses and cities everything is too large and too small; too few and too many; too far and too near; too much and too little the same; too much and too little different. There is no question of right size. What has right size is at once near and far, simple and complex, open and closed. It will, moreover, always be both part and whole and embrace both unity and diversity. No, as conflicting polarities or false alternatives the hollow halves all spread the same evil: loss of identity and its attributes; frustration, isolation and monotony (monotony not merely in the sense of uniformity because as I have already said: if a thing is too much and too little the same, it will also be too much and too little different).

RIGHT SIZE WILL FLOWER AS SOON AS THE MILD GEARS OF RECIPROCITY BEGIN TO MOVE — IN THE CLIMATE OF RELATIVITY; IN THE LANDSCAPE OF ALL TWIN PHENOMENA.

When I say: make a welcome of each door and a countenance of each window; make of each a place and a bunch of places of each house and each city, because man's home-realm is the Inbetween Realm (the realm of architecture sets out to articulate), my intention is to provide the right scope for multimeaning. As soon as the equilibrating impact of the Inbetween Realm (extended so that it coincides with the bunch of places both house and city should be) manifests itself in a comprehensibly articulated configuration, the chances that the terrifying polarities which hitherto have harrassed man's right composure may still be reconciled will certainly be greater.

It is still a question of twin phenomena, a question of providing the inbetween places where they can be encountered, readily mitigating psychic strain.

The motive behind the statement — a house is a tiny city, a city a huge house, is to unmask the falsity which adheres to an array of false polarities. Not merely the small versus the large; many versus few; near versus far; but also part versus whole; unity versus diversity; individual versus collective; simplicity versus complexity; closed versus open and interior versus exterior. It seems to me, moreover, that the statement

upsets the fatuous architect — urbanist hierarchy. It does what I wanted it to do — gladly. The statement creates a climate in which the four isolated terms, tiny — city — huge — house, released from the bondage of their limited definition, can encounter each other liberally. The statement is, of course, ambiguous and consciously so. It's ambiguity is of a kind I should like to see transposed to architecture. It certainly belongs to the Inbetween Realm which — this must be stressed — includes, never excludes, significant meaning. Through identification the statement induces the limited connotations that have fastened on to the idea house and the city to relinquish their hold. The essential sameness of house and city dwells in a different dimension altogether to the one which their alleged differences is miserably cloistered. Both house and city are a bunch of places for people. Does it bring us anywhere to say one is much larger than the other, has more places, more aspects or is more complex? I think it is better to say — look, they are all for the same species, so if they are right — possess right size — they will be as simple and complex as the species they provide for, regardless of whether the bunch is small or large, whether there are few places to a small one and many to a large one, or many places to a small one and few to a large one.

Something may be appreciated as being too small because it is small in the wrong way or not small enough in the right way. There may be too few of them, which-may again imply too small in the wrong way; or there may be too many which, once more, may imply too small in the wrong way. Similarly something can be too large because it is large in the wrong way or not large enough in the right way. It may be too large because there are too few or too many of them in the wrong way — i.e. not enough in the right way!
Objects may elude right-size, which includes right number and distance, because they are the same in the wrong way or not different enough in the right way. The difference may be too small or too large (too small or too large in the wrong way). This would mean that there is no significant difference or nothing significantly the same — have no real unity complexity. When one deals with plurality one cannot disregard the singular nor can one deal with the singular and disregard the plural. "Harmony in motion" embraces classical harmony — it does not reject it. (In order that we may overcome the menace of quantity the laws of what I call "harmony in motion" must be discovered — the aesthetics of number).
It is good to discover similarity in different ways and to recognise real differences as variations of the same — as good as it is to experience a similar kind of occasion repeated in different places and different kinds of occasions occurring in the same place.

TREE IS LEAF AND LEAF IS TREE HOUSE IS CITY AND CITY IS HOUSE.

Take my part and there is the whole. Take the whole and behold the part. Whole is part and part is whole (provided each is identified with what it needs in order to be house, city, leaf or tree; moisture, air, sap; people and peoples' activities, emotions, associations.

It is the multiple meaning within the two images that matters in each case.

A tree is a tree because it is also a large leaf.

A leaf is a leaf because it is also a small tree.

A city is a city because it is also a large house.

A house is a house because it is also a small city.

Say, tree, leaf, large leaf, small tree;

Say, leaves or leaves on a tree;

Say, a few leaves still or many leaves soon;

Say, leafless tree.

Say, this tree when my child grows up and that tree when I was young.

Say, one tree, lots of trees, all sorts of trees, trees in the forest.

Say, forest (hear: dark, lost, owl's hoot, squirrel, toadstool, tiger, timber).

Say, apple tree, apples, apple pie.

Say, NUTS!

I have spoken of place; of house and city as bunches of places — both; of the Inbetween Realm as man's home-realm.

I have identified the built artifact with those it shelters (the building with that building entered) — and, having done so, found it expedient TO DEFINE SPACE SIMPLY AS THE APPRECIATION OF IT, thus excluding all frozen properties attributed to it academically whilst including that which must never be excluded: man appreciating it.
I have called architecture built homecoming.

Now it is with this in mind that I have come to regard architecture, conceived primarily in terms of direct space-expression, chained to the limitations of visibility, as abstract and arbitrary.

By virtue of what memory and anticipation really signify place acquires temporal meaning and occasion spatial meaning. Thus space and time, identified reciprocally (in the image of man) — emerges — humanified — as place and occasion. Architecture must therefore "open" both space and time; "interiorise" them so that they can be "entered" — for space and time are still hideously inaccessible and void (the transparency of time is indeed opening up old mechanical notions!). Architecture must also awaken to the truth that places remembered and anticipated dovetail in time's transparency and that the great network of associations turns consecutive appreciation into simultaneous appreciation — from place to place, from occasion to occasion.

The large house=little city statement (the one that states a house is a tiny city, a city a huge house) can get on very well with these simple forgotten truths. It possesses a kind of clarity that never quite relinquishes the secrets it guards. It is, above all, — this is my final point — a kind neither house nor city can do without. Let me

CALL IT
LABYRINTHIAN CLARITY
Such clarity (ally of ambiguity) softens the edges of time and space and responds to regions beyond visibility (allows spaces to enter each other — occasions to encounter each other).

The Inbetween (home) Realm is never without it.

Right-size goes hand in hand with it. It harbours beautiful qualities; it is kaleidoscopic, has:

Scope for that which is small yet large — large yet small;

near yet far — far yet near;
open yet closed — closed yet open;
outside yet inside — inside yet outside;

and, without scope for the right delay;

the right release;
the right certainty;
the right security;
the right response;
the right surprise;

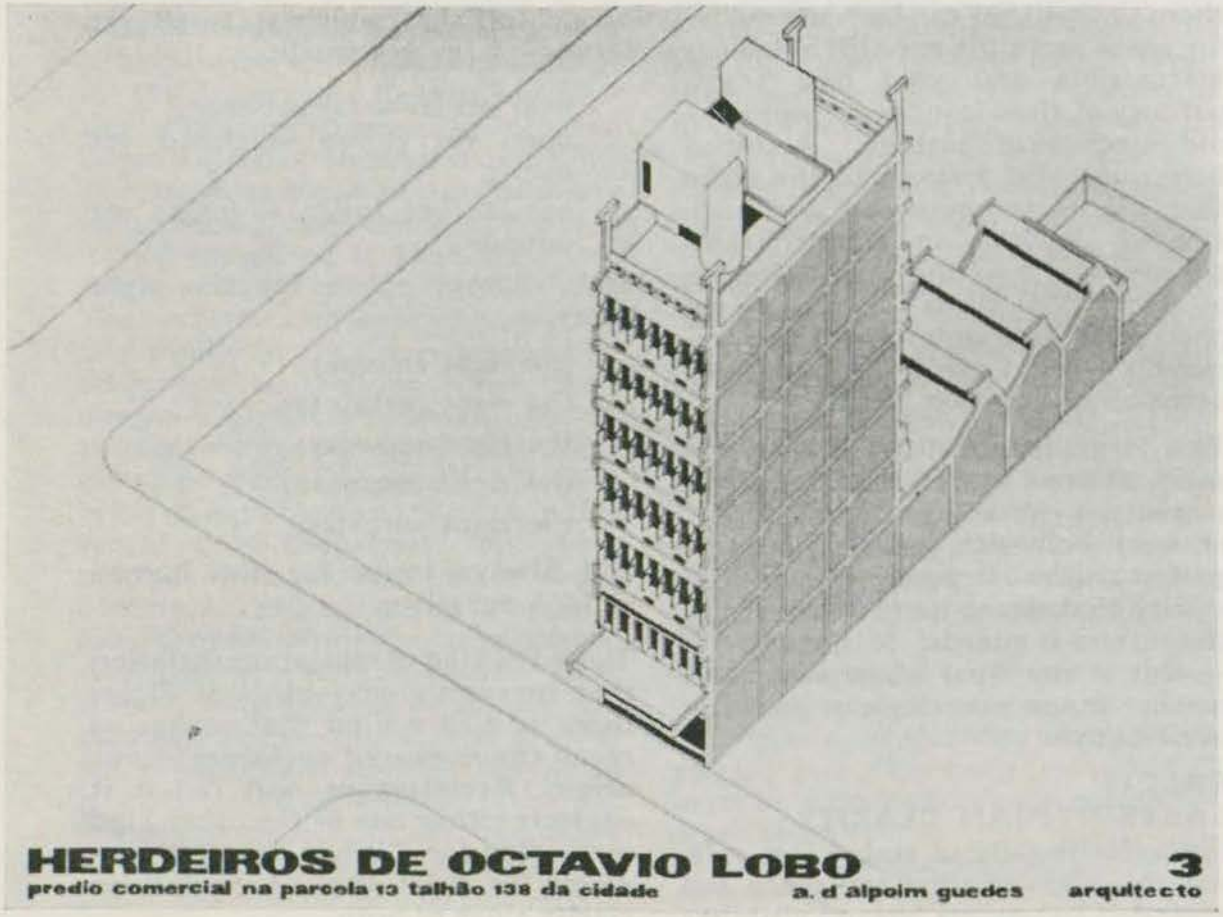
and always scope for the human child — ourselves.

There is a kind of spatial appreciation that makes us envy birds at flight; there is also a kind that makes us recall the sheltered enclosure of our origin. Architecture will fail if it neglects either one or the other kind (providing for Caliban requires providing for Ariel also). Labyrinthian clarity sings of both.

FOUR SIGHTS AND THE

A. D' ALPOLM GUEDES

Some work progressing, some work waiting, some work already dead.
For you, future beauticians, nurses, butchers of the face of the earth; from a middle-aging hand with mixed feelings and as a tender warning.



For money's sake — a narrow slice of offices; a building for hire; a carcass to be stuffed with business. Each floor to be cut up into boxes for people and things. A sky-eyed stair case haunted by the blue white light pit in Gaudi's Casa Batllo. One face screened from the late afternoon's low diagonal sun by vertical translucent marble disks — another sheltered from the high angled noon sun by horizontal marble bands. The two others — one to be immediately shut off, blinded — the other to wait, sightless, for a future neighbour.

The city lies cut up in narrow strips by expediency and greed; bound by inflexible rules and orders. The streets are parades of temporary towers. The face of a street spreads and grows with gaps in between. Through the gaps we may glimpse some remnants of architecture. It happens mostly on the backs of buildings. The fronts are expensive fakes, at most, two feet deep architectural soft goods — trollops made up to flatter the timid operators of big money — trollops made up to boost the soft egos of artful academicians.

For money's sake — my own 8.00 metres broad slice of street face.

WHOSING OF SAKES

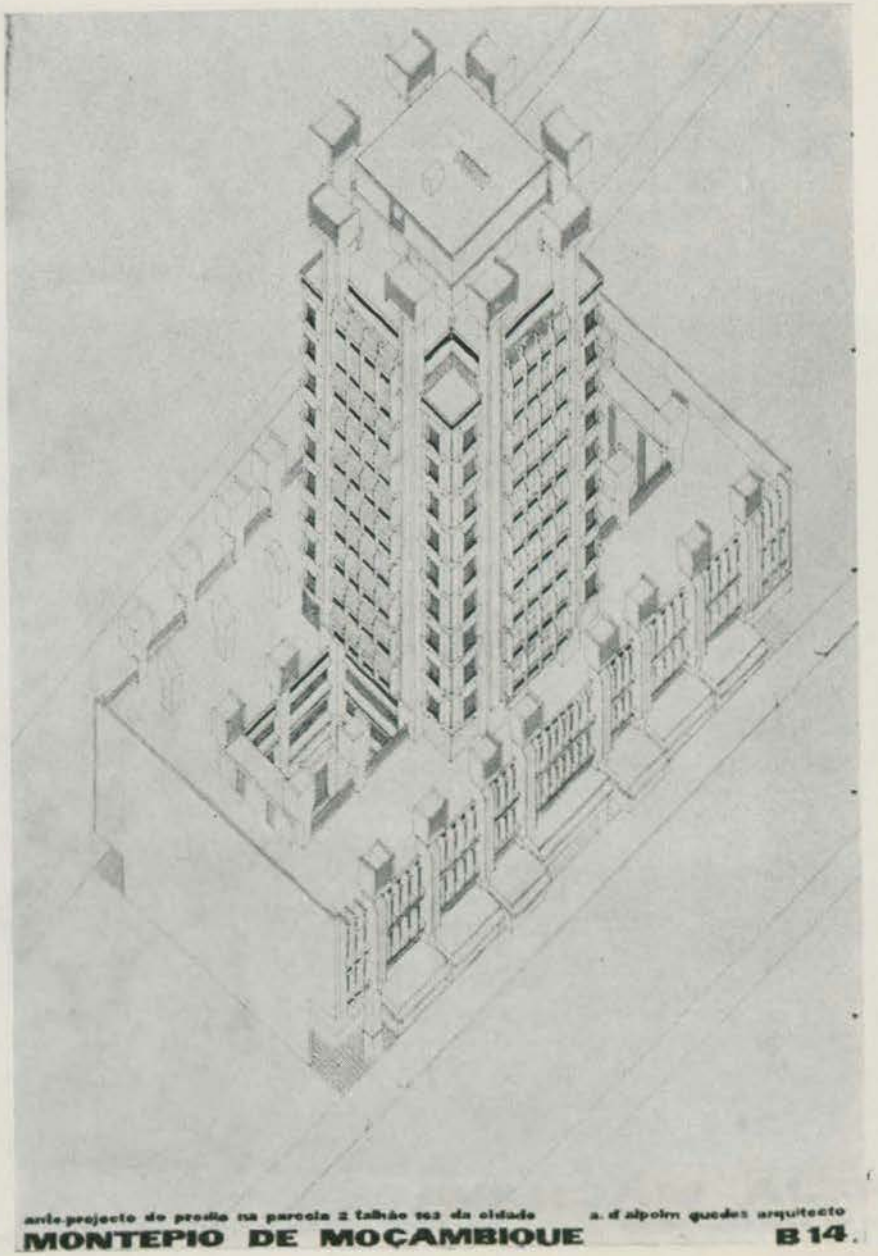
For competitors' sake—a mechanical tower; a fool proof survivor; a ready made money maker to be disguised as shops, dance halls, garages, brothels, offices, cabarets, flats, hotel, sky signs — to keep up with the changing city; the city that never knows it's own mind.

My ideal tower had round hollow pillar-ducts with pipes, engines, ladders and men inside. Each column was crowned by fat machine rooms buzzing in the sky. Each face on each floor showed the mask it needed to wear — the owners kept a stock of noses and eyes to suit each tenant's face. The masks wore signs and slogans where they wanted. The tower hummed, groaned, gasped and dribbled like the ships tied to the docks across the street.

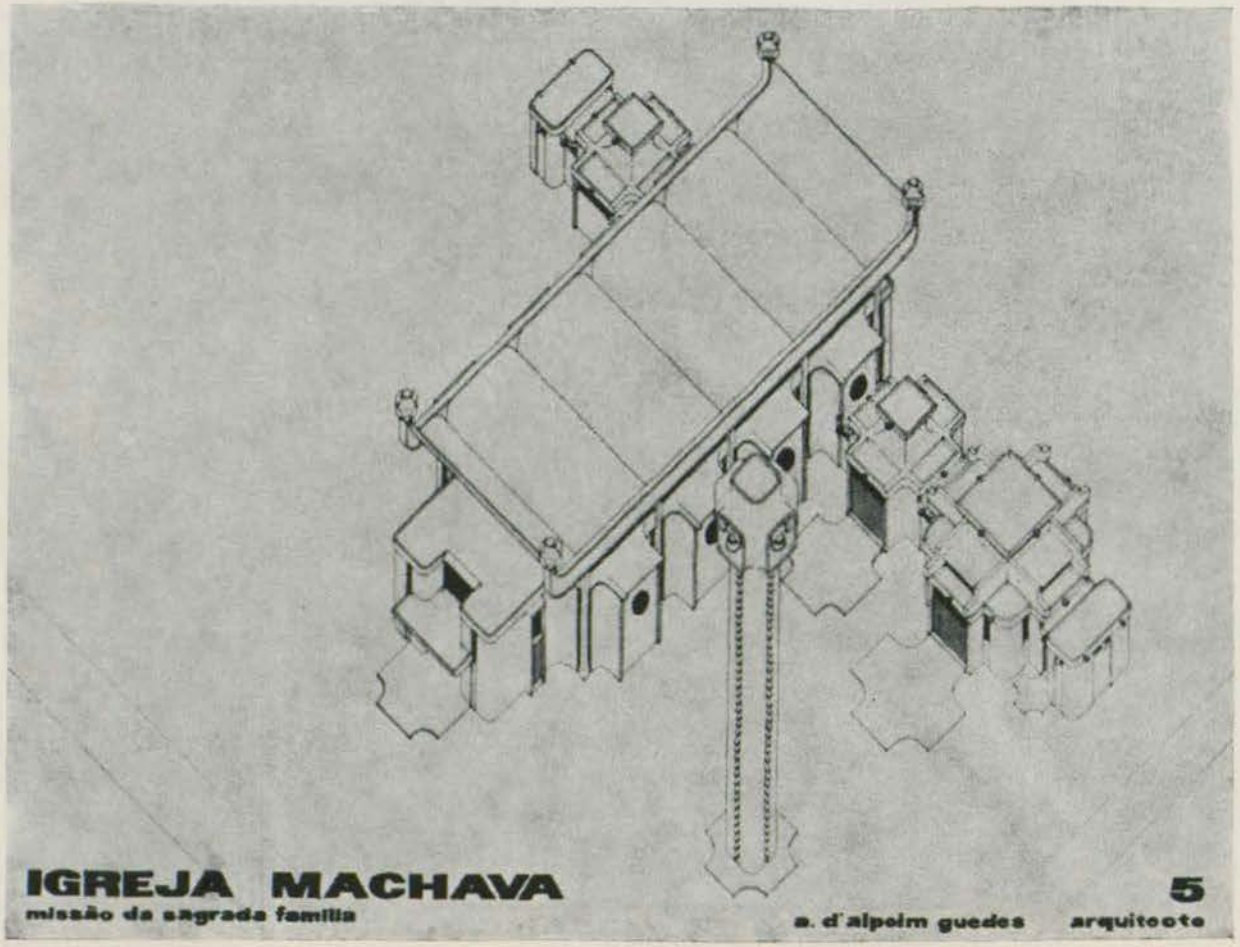
Buildings shall welcome chaos and the needs of the living. Architecture shall have some feeling.

The sight is a diluted version of the idea — trying to win on owners' money making — fighting the cool shadow war that may yet make architecture possible.

For competition sake — my own well meant compromise.



FOUR SIGHTS AND THE



For God's sake and done for love — the little church of the "Sagrada Familia" at Machava.

The dream was once a monster chip factory — gone cold and mouldy — uneaten. The dream was once three houses—one after another —all born dead. The dream is now a church in progress — so far only as far as its knees. So far it has survived unscathed, a proposed fattening, an attempt on the altar.

It is a Japanese flavoured temple, a dolled up factory roof, some small public lavatories, a bookless library, a village square, a bell periscope, a singing shelf — and it wears eight glass rock suns on its side faces. The concavities of the outside are for hide-and-seek games, for lovers, for young gangs.

Buildings shall also become habitable outside.

It is a hand-made building already wearing my wished for, assembled factory-cast look.

For Christ's sake — my own good intentioned fake.

WHOSING OF SAKES

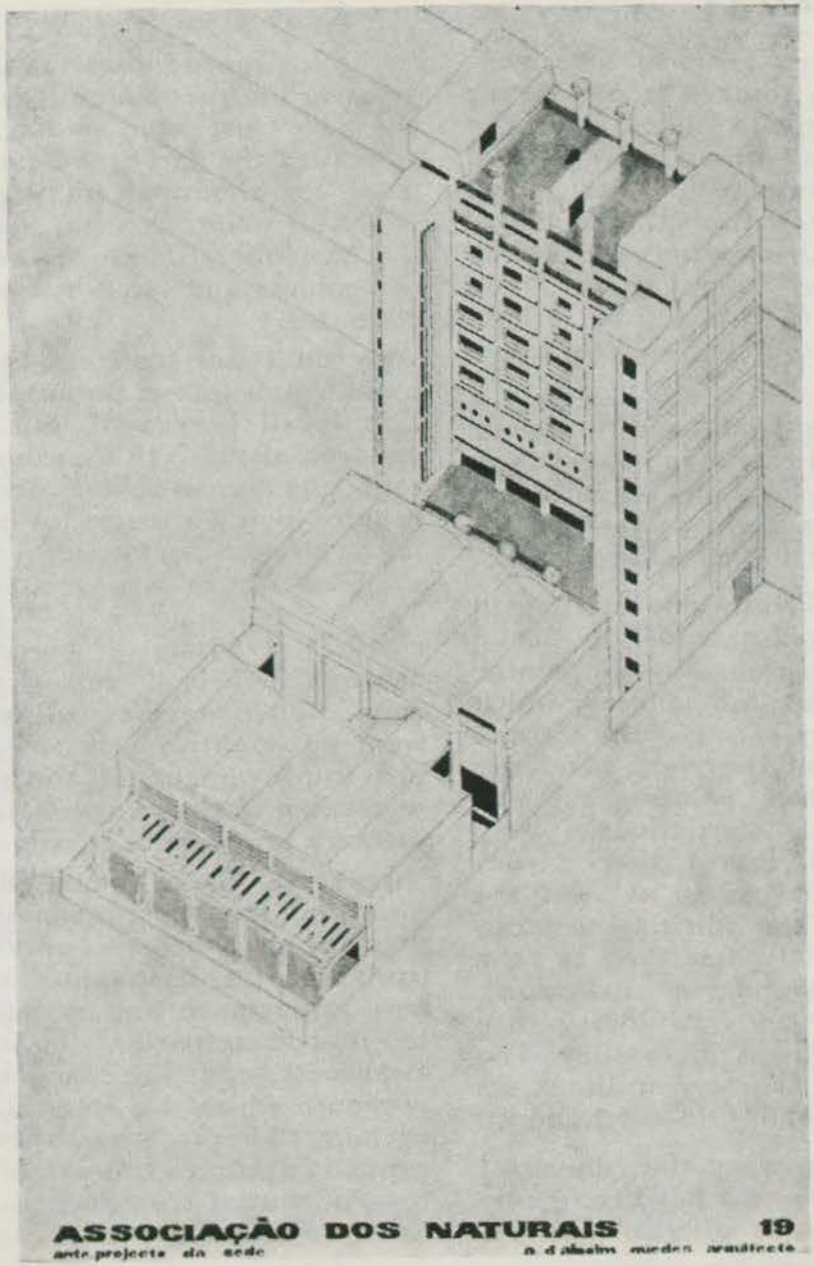
For ten thousand members' sake and for myself, a tall club house inside the city. A machine for cultivating and mixing cultures, and for languid leisures, on a small site bound by many town planning commandments. This heap will roar and mumble, laugh and whisper, with the voices and ideas of ten thousand people; in the loud metallic cafe on the street side; in the steep intellectual auditorium; in the pin-balling, ping-pong tabled youth branch, in the double storied library swot boxes; in the class-rooms which sometimes are committed, in the clattering news paper offices, in the back to front, stained printing room; in the quiet soft-floored hostel's corridors.

A naked, grey, raw concrete house with bright viceral mauve, red and pink insides; round eyed, much slitted, many nozzled. A buildingswarming with people, with faces looking out of windows, nattering, watching and living.

The sight is the tall club house as it was when it was April — he is now more muscular, more relaxed — beginning to look side-ways.

Is it possible to accelerate the mechanics of creation so the insight gained from invention shall be arrived at during the doing?

For ten thousand's sake — my own concrete elephant will stand — it will be built in stages.



THE HEN ON HER EGG

W. B. PABST

It is not yet forty years ago that we — young men as you are today — went for inspiration and guidance to Mies v. d. Rohe and other exponents of the new architecture. Yet today, after such a short time, their achievements have already become, in the hands of the demigogues, stale cliches, as at the time of our fathers the Greek columns and Baroque windows.

Now in turn, you hand me your manifesto and ask me to relate to you some of my personal experiences which may assist you in your search for fundamental architectural values.

I remember vividly one evening in Mies v. d. Rohe's studio in Berlin when a then famous Russian painter showed him his last painting, which was plain grey canvas with a small whire cross on the right hand top corner. In this painting he was honest to his convictions. Any qualitative attributes taken from the phenomenal world as such are degrading to the spirit, which can only be correctly described as "the pure nothing" (Master Eckehard). From this point of view life is either an illusion (Hindu Philosophy, The Greek Iliads) or more militant sin (Prophets of the Old Testament).

The conflict between the "universal spirit" and our soul has been going on for thousands of years, but is becoming more intense as time progresses. In my opinion it is because we have lost our animal instinct which led the early cave dwellers to paint for thousands of years their beautiful paintings, and which was the basis for all cultures lasting for milleniums and later in Europe for centuries.

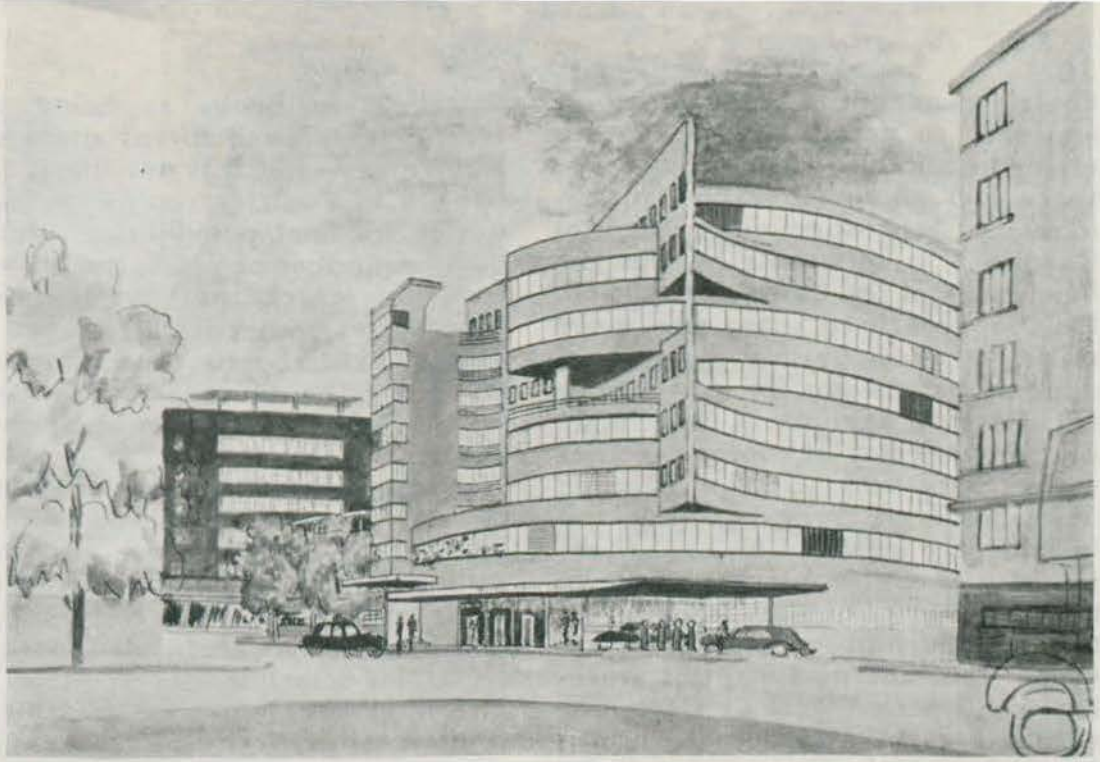
Why do I deviate from the actual theme of my letter? Because imagination is all very well, but we are children of the 20th Century and intellectual human beings. As such we require logical answers for our queries or else we cannot work, and may even be led to wrong conclusions. The Russian painter is, I think, a classical example. I myself went through a period during which I defined all fantasy as evil, and later went into politics because I thought the improvement of the material well-being of the human race was of primary importance.

Vice versa, if one is metaphysically aware of the true meaning of the phenomenal world, this prevents one from accepting false values, and gives new importance and responsibility to artistic activities. It was such awareness and the dangers from without, which led Neitzscher to exclaim: "I implore you my brothers, remain faithful to this earth!"
It is, of course, true that one cannot force imagination; one cannot do anything about it if the moment of inspiration never comes: but unless one keeps oneself prepared and worthy for it, it will surely never come at all. In my experience intellectual clarity can be of great help in this respect.

Talking about architecture, there seems to me, right through history to be two different lines of approach based on the characters of the groups as such, and particularly in later times of the individual artist. Both lines in turn cross one another. Firstly there are periods when buildings are predominantly sculptural (Egypt, Greece) or display decorative treatment of the surrounding surfaces (Renaissance); in contrast there are periods when the creation of space is most important, and the treatment of the shell takes second place (Byzantine architecture, European architecture up to Baroque with the exclusion of the Renaissance).

There is in addition, the second line, i.e. the static outlook (East Asia, Greece, Romanesque in Europe) against the dynamic attitude predominantly evident in the Gothic and Baroque.

I myself was fortunate to have been able to work in my decisive years under two great architects in Berlin: Hans Poelzig and Mies v. d. Rohe.





Poelzig was not a radical in his approach to detail, but had an unerring instinctive feeling for dynamic space and an unbelievable fantasy. (Grosses Schauspielhouse, Capitol Cinema). In this sense he was the lonely heir of the Baroque tradition. Meis' approach to space was more static, typified by his more two-dimensional designs (House Tugenthut, German Pavilion in Barcelona). But his interplay of rooms together with a very sure selection of basic materials were very beautiful and had a great influence on us. There was also of course, his discoveries of the possibilities of glass which eventually made him world famous.

Other relevant personalities working in this period were Le Corbusier with his clean intellectual uncompromising outlook, and in direct opposition, Gaudi of Barcelona. The latter was, unfortunately, already dead when I saw his work. His inexhaustible inventive power for colourful detail work is overwhelming. Yet the design of his major work (Sagrada Famil) remains rather well within the Gothic concept of a cathedral. Coming back to Poelzig and the Baroque; from early youth I have been fascinated by movement and countermovement in any form: skating, dancing and later, space in architecture. So I looked at Poelzigs work, at the Baroque churches, particulatly Vierzehn Heiligen by Balthasar Neumann — all very beautiful but not fully satisfying. The latter consists in plan on the ground floor of three elipses which penetrate each other, with balconies on the first floor in opposite directions. It is described in books as being the typical example of curves and counter-curves — but it is not there, and neither in Poelzigs rooms, at least not in its final possibilities. After quite a number of years, the answer suddenly struck me; by designing the plan symmetrically around a central axis, the contrast was neutralised. The counter-curve of one is at the same time a continuation of the other.

The conclusion was obvious; half circular plan with a curved balcony in the opposite direction, with the ceiling similarly treated in asymetric contrast to the walls. The interior of the Cinema in Greenside is designed on this principle.

The next problem was to achieve similar results by means of volume and vacuums. The Esselen Hospital is one of these attempts.

Thereafter followed three buildings, based on a new principle — to design the floors alternatively in contrast to each other so that the first, third and fifth, etc., are identical counter-curves to the second and fourth, etc. (Chinese Club, Patidar Prop, Academy House). Except for some occasional designs, there followed a period of inventive inactivity.

In the meantime, Mies v. d. Rohe had in the U.S.A. at least the opportunity to have his earlier dreams converted into reality. Even then I felt that this was not the end. The mere "mirror" effect, stressed by some critics, seems to me to be just the opposite of what architecture means. I was still thinking and wondering, when about three years ago, I knew the answer. I hope to be able to apply it shortly in a new building. In the meantime, you will have to forgive me if I do not say more at this stage.

It will be obvious that from my early remarks I am not sure that the human race is the crown of creation. Therefore, the catering for material needs itself does not make a building a piece of art. Naturally, it is important for a building to be as functional and as perfectly practical as possible. But I am of the opinion that where functionalism ends, architecture begins. It seems to me that even sub-consciously the same applies to your group. Otherwise you would not have chosen some of my works for your exhibition. I am the first to admit that purely functionally there will be better hospitals in Johannesburg than mine; so there must be something else which appeals to you after all these years, and that is what counts.

Apropos age: Poelzig, when warning us about following a fashion-trend too readily, said: it does not matter today whether or not the Saint Chapel was modern anno 1200. The main thing is that it is good. After all, it is the depth of feeling which the works stirs up in the onlooker which is the only criterion of its quality. The more intense the inspiration, the more will the artist disappear behind the work for the creation of which he is, in fact, only the tool.

Not everybody can be a genius, and not every building lends itself to great architecture. As long as it is designed without any false pretences and frills, it is probably the most one can expect.



The times of the great cathedrals, palaces of kings and bishops are gone. If an artist is lucky he might find a Macene of his own. Most architects today are forced to become business men as well, which makes it more difficult for those who still dream. That problem they have to fight out for themselves (I only wonder why the Universities do not teach students how to run an office economically). But as far as imagination is concerned, I can give you only this practical advice from my experience; as I have said before, you cannot force inspiration, sit down and say: now I want to have an idea. (I remember Mies v. d. Rohe in the latter days saying to us, "one must one day make something new again." But time and patience are a condition sine qua non. If you feel dissatisfied; if you sense that something more is possible and wants to be born, don't give in if it takes time, do not lose the enthusiasm of your youth. Think about it, sit on the problem like a hen on her egg. If you are lucky, it will be alive. But unless you do so, nothing will be hatched at all. It may take a long time — in my own case nearly a lifetime — but it is worth it. As a matter of fact, it is the only artistic activity which makes sense. Le Corbusier in his "Vers une Architecture" described how a little church in Rome, Santa Maria in Cosmedin, impressed him more than any of the big and famous buildings. "It touches my heart," he said. It is gratifying to know that sometimes I have achieved the same and I thank you for telling me.

TOWARDS A 20th CENTURY ARCHITECTURE

IVOR PRINSLOO

INTRODUCTION

The September Exhibition of 1962 was a definite event resulting from a particular set of circumstances and was consciously thought of as providing a point of departure from this context. The conditions that led to the September Exhibition were such that, if the point of departure has not been generally taken, the necessity for another stand remains, whether in the individuals' insistence on the essential privacy of the explorations and concerns that only become public in the form of a building, whether by yet another exhibition —and another, or by what, because of its motivation, becomes a significant fact in itself, an evaluation of the implications of the September Exhibition.

The first part of these pages from a notebook are a contribution to any assessment that may want to be made. They are simply a record of how one person saw the context of the Exhibition and what he made it mean for himself. This, therefore has relevance only where such an assessment is being made. In any other event these pages cease to have value and should be destroyed. In this case space provided for in the magazine can more relevantly be filled by any of the following, the choice to be made by the Editor, or if this is considered too dictatorial, by a Selection Committee, or if this is considered too arbitary, by drawing lots:—

a. Any part of "Through the looking glass".

b. The first story in "True Confessions" of September, 1962.

c. Any part of "King Lear".

d. "Jerusalem" by William Blake. Illustrated.

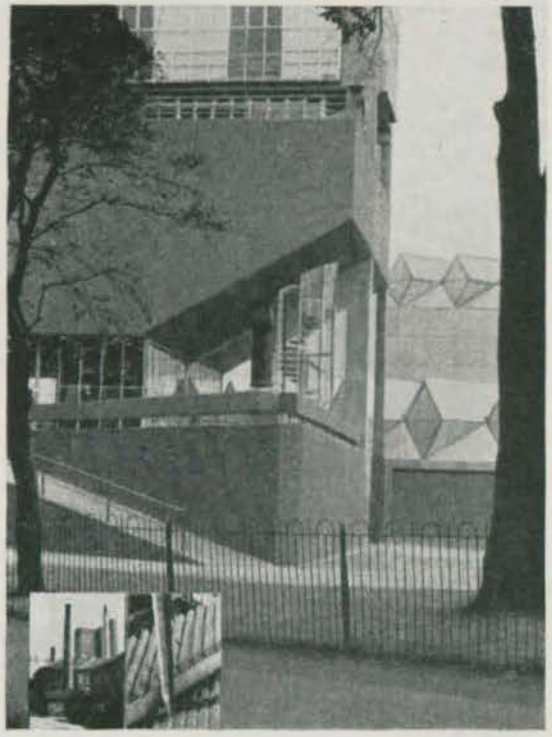
e. Any play by Genet.

f. "The Duncaid" by Alexander Pope.

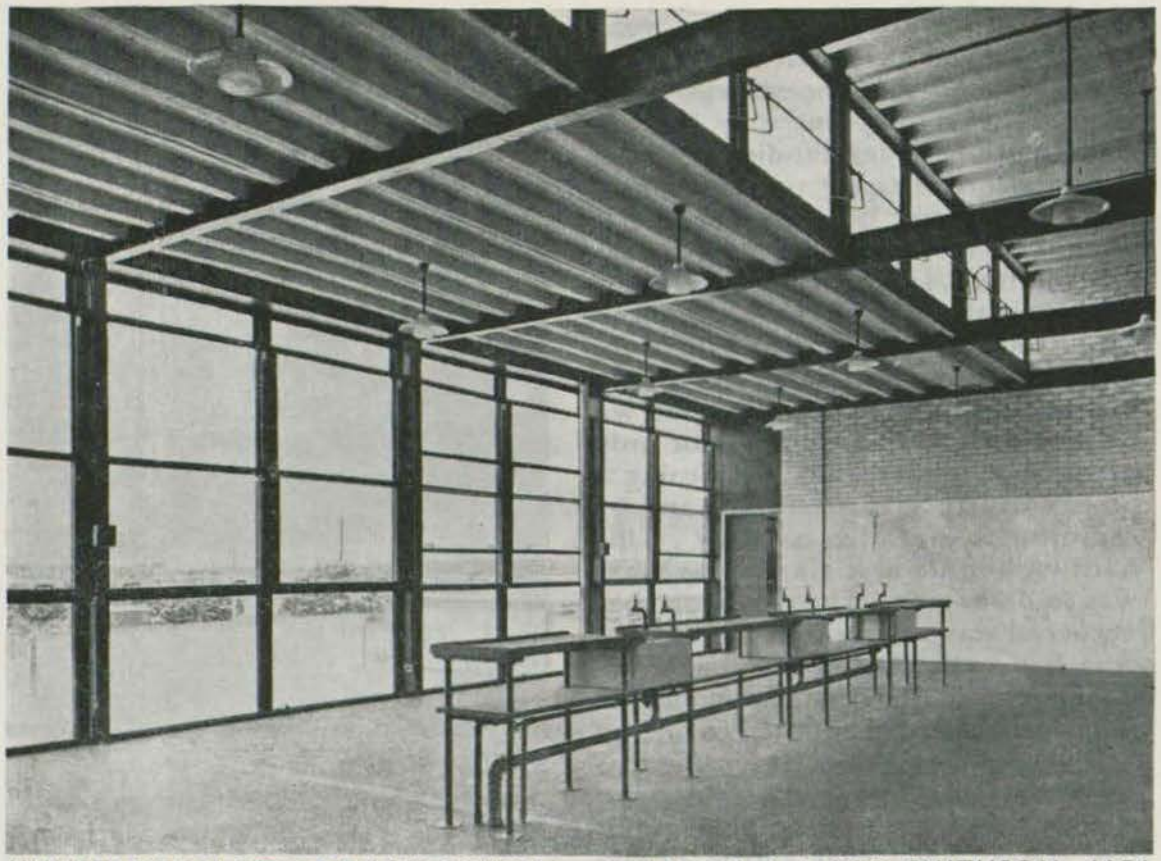
A cautionary note added is that neither the Editor nor the writer may be held responsible for readers being misled by applying the literary aspects of these to architecture and that any resemblance to living persons is quite fortuitous.

Any evaluation of a particular event is best done considering the context of the event in as much of its totality as possible. When the event is a very specific outcome of a definite set of circumstances then it becomes the only possible way to do so with any viability. The conditions that led to the September Exhibition were furthermore general enough to be perennial to any vested situation and would sooner or later have to be corrected for. To have accepted them then, or similar ones now, would have been to have had to agree to die a little in order to remain alive at all. This may well be the only method of survival in the long run, be that as it may, but it is definitely not the way to be recommended where values are being tested such as at a school of architecture. The year 1962 was one of singular unrest at the University. The most striking thing at that time was the feeling of a total breakdown of communication, between individuals, between groups of students, between the students as a body and the staff, between the school and architects. A great deal of it had much to do with factors affecting the general climate of the country, a growing sense of alienation within the country and as a country, an ever increasing awareness of the conflict with the developing social structure. The feeling of having to do something, beyond eminently satisfying feelings of guilt, beyond Sunday-morning protestations, to face the unanswered, often unasked, question, of "what to do?"

At this time in the school the students in the first four years where all ones that had taken the first year basic design course and it was amongst these that the unrest was most noticeable. This point may be crucial to the understanding of the situation. The thing to remember, however, is that no series of fundamental revaluations of the visual environment, such as the course was, is sufficient in itself to create the conditions for a general revaluation. It was simply the trigger to a long overdue hard look at just what we were supposed to be doing, not only at the University, but in claiming a place in society as architects and by claiming to be alive as men. This hard look in its first glance was what was so damaging. The situation that occurred was simply that of students who had experienced a valuable reassessment of the visual environment in general terms that failed to find an equally valuable way of carrying this over the traditional particulars of their profession. The crucial point has always been that subtle breakthrough from the end of basic training into the second year, from the general exploration to the particular application and in spite of very brave attempts by the staff it just did not work. This is a real educational problem and is solveable. Basic design as a discipline is not at fault as has been demonstrated by other schools. Somehow there was too much resistance in the air, too much lurking mythology that did not work, residual, undefined, *classical* or, where defined, tending to a formalism that depended upon concepts and systems, of proportion etc., that were meaningless.



'LEICESTER' ENGINEERING BUILDING
1963-4 STIRLING & GOWEN

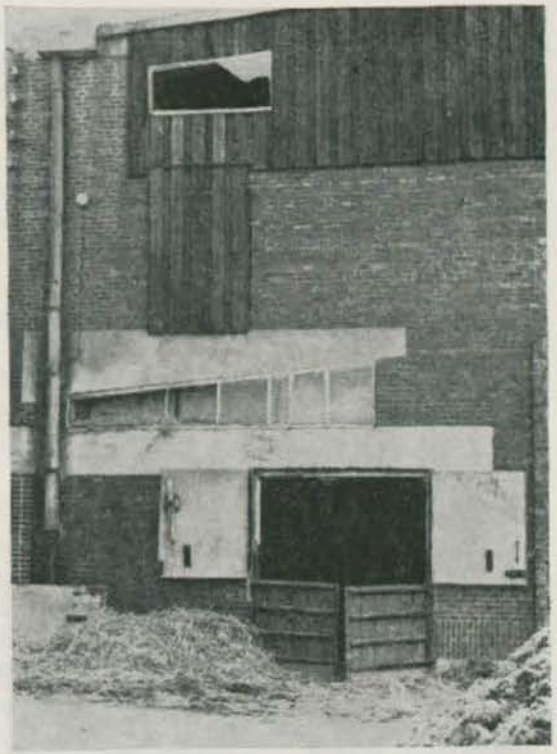


HUNSTANTON SECONDARY SCHOOL · ALESON & PETER SMITHSON, 1954

People working in other disciplines had long since rejected the notion of universally known and generally accepted systems of values and it was meaningless to cling to the mythology these standards had engendered. Reaction on the part of the students was immediate in that they simply refused to take part in this levelling process, to be part of the devalued mythology that it seemed one had to support in the 'great-deception—that—is—art'. They had found certainty in some particulars, they were all imprisoned in the subjectivity of their own experiences, very much aware of the viability of their own positions, feeling that they had the strength to explore, to change and influence in a modest way, yet did not have the power to do so in terms of their expected daily concerns. To join forces as a committee representing the students, although the only way to get a general hearing, seemed foolish, quixotic in a way, a betrayal of the valuable singularity newly found, a definite invitation to the devaluation of those very concerns that were important. The axiomatical result of such a situation is towards violence and chaos on the one hand and towards total inertia on the other. Complementary to this was the existing architectural reality, of serious controversy within the Institute of Architects about issues that affected the future of young architects and some of important buildings built that were immediate examples infallible in their indication of the hopeless confusion that was present in most architectural thinking. The major error that concerned people made at that time was in seeing these buildings as deliberate illustrations of a coherent approach, the implications of which were totally at a variance with what any informed observer would expect as the logical outcome of local conditions, rather than seeing them for what they are, just plain bad building. To look critically at buildings and the profession is part of that revaluation that should be the considered duty of all students, but only insofar as it leads to efficiency. When professional status becomes an end in itself, divorced from the social reality, then it ceases to be of relevance in the process of significant building and hence of no interest whatsoever to the student or the concerned practitioner. For the student it meant wanting a position of real value in society, serving a viable function, our survival as a profession dependant upon our fulfilling a real need beyond restrictive legislation, cultural lag and the pretensions of the paying public. If this calls for a definition of what an architect is, of how he can best do what he is to do, calls for a relook at the mythology of our collective

pretensions and if this redefinition of that role within which we can work most viably calls for an extension of activities beyond that defined by the Institute then let us make the adjustment ourselves rather than have it thrust at us when the balloon pops, when the cultural lag under which we shield catches up. It is surely not untenable for the student to want that he should be equipped to cope with the wider reality of his profession and whilst not postulating utopian conditions expect more from his profession than vested professional protection. The moral injunctions of the foundation are still much with us and have yet to be met, more so now on the brink of what seems to be another age of electicism, of juke box victoriana.

Objects had been found in the immediate environment that were charged with meaning. They were buildings that were tangible statements made in terms that were able to present something visually valuable, something more in accord with the sum of our personal intuitions of how things ought to be put together than those things that daily passed as examples of what architecture was about. They were concrete images that had a coherence transcending the futile abstract diversions that architects seemed to be playing when faced with similar problems. We accepted that these things may well be overstatements in our common generality but they were at least indicative of the existence and, to us, the viability of ways of doing things that were more direct, more honest in a way more to do with the particulars of the problem, far less emasculated, far less "arty" than what was then passing for architectural profundity. Above all, the value seen was that here were things that had been produced in a way that made full use of the value of place and the importance of occasion. What cannot be overstressed was that it was not merely the formal language of these buildings that impressed us, we realized the value of understatement in a climate of loaded cliché. The call was not for "more rawness, more roughness, fatter beams" . . . . utterances of a then still embryonic formalism, the energetic somnambulism that is the fashion today, but rather that it was possible by meeting a problem fully, in all its complexity, by solving it directly, with constant concern for its actual real use and to do this in such a way that by the sheer clarity of the organization it gains something beyond the mere solution of these factors, poetic content in a way. Was there not something to be learned from these buildings? A way to an architecture of higher complexity, hence more able to produce truly simple, clear comprehensible buildings, an architecture of greater depth, hence outliving the rapid fluctuations of our vacillating concerns, an architecture of infinitely greater craftsmanship, hence beyond the false practicality and overdetailing the dull, utilitarian concerns of substandard practices. For nothing was more obvious then, as it is now, of our total failure of being able to fulfil what is surely one of the most important tasks of human



GUT GARKAU. 1923. HUGO-HÄRING



CINEAC CINIMA (AMSTERDAM)
Duiker 1934

artifice, to provide a dwelling place for man that is more stable, more permanent than we are ourselves.
December, 1962.

Either — Or . . . towards a beginning.
with apologies to —saman
thasmithsonarymurphy(s)
dodofreudianfathershan
nahhahaesslinetera.

The specific problem was how to solve the Exhibition formally, of how to present the objects found in all their richness without their losing total identity, and above all, without devalueing them for ourselves. To generalize about them in any way, even if only in terms of grouping the photographs formally, or of making the necessary translation into the logical and temporal sequence that a planned exhibition seems to imply, would rob them of even more of their inherent poetic content than had the act of selection in photographing them. There was this concern of wanting to provide a point of departure and what was important in this was that the means of postulating this formally should in itself be the first act of further exploration. It had to be more than the satirical indication of the vacuum in most architectural thinking, more than merely trying to convey information, more than trying to pose a problem, even though the problem was a first order one. It became having to present our collected and collective intuitions as a pattern of images and associations which with the physical means of construction had to work as a mutually interdependent structure. We had to construct a device to present a complex total image in all its ambiguity and in such a way that the viewer had to become involved, even if only in terms of making a definite rejection.

The materials for the constructional part of the final structure were scaffolding of three lengths, two types of coupling, corrugated iron sheets, fixing bolts for the corrugated iron. They were thus standard materials, free from any complex connotations, with a limited visual value of their own. The fact that they were standard was important since one of the concerns was to emphasize the way of 'putting together' rather than the units themselves, the emphasis on the process itself, to give it visual value. A way of grouping these units so as to guarantee an eventual order that was comprehensible had to be found, a system of control towards an undefined end result and a means of being certain of the relevance of each step to the total significance of the end result, and this had to be done in such a way that experience gained as we proceeded could be fed back into the system.

What is important about this is that we had to deal with the problem of planning, control and communication when working in terms of process rather than of visual end result. With the exhibition planning and control were done directly in that we built without drawings, by trial and error, and communication was done



'SCHOOL' AMSTERDAM . DUIKER 1930-2

away with by virtue of the fact that we built it ourselves. This is very viable way of doing things where there is time and where errors may be corrected. What would happen where this could not be done? How could this be planned and how could control be exercised and, secondly, how could this information be communicated to another person? Assuming that we had worked out the final form the problem became easier but still not easily solveable in traditional terms of plan, section and elevation. This is a real problem and has implications beyond the particular of the Exhibition.

*Building at Leicester University. Stirling and Gowan. Completed 1964. Parts of this building could not be communicated by means of drawings. This fact and the fact that it is so well built makes it more a tribute to the architects than an indictment. This complexity is partly due to the language chosen rather than to any involvement with forms resulting from a system that remains 'open'. This may be a criticism but any that may exist will have to be in these terms and the implications of this, on the context, rather than in terms of the context.

In order to solve our problems at all we are having to build at a much larger scale than ever before. This increase in size usually means an increase in the complexity of the project. Because we have learned to consider the context of the single building and because we have more information that has to be taken into account we find that even at a small scale we are having to work with a more complex order.

*Hunstanton Secondary School. Alison and Peter Smithson. Completed 1954.

This remains one of the most significant buildings to be seen in Britain in spite of the 'Zone of Silence' that has slid around it. When it is spoken of at all it is in terms of its formal plan, its proportions, and sometimes its elegance (or lack of) all of which have nothing to do with its *current* significance. It is good almost in spite of these when one looks at the degrees of order that run through the building and how they work in terms of the total image that one experiences and comes away with and when one thinks of *how it was made*, how the details were solved utilizing full feed-back from the site. Work it out. Architectural Review, September 1954.

Simplification of end result is important in so far as it is towards the most comprehensible presentation of the problem solved in its totality but it is quite valueless where it is the simplicity obtained by partially ignoring the problem by the initial act of definition or that brought about by the subjugation of the problem by a

geometry or system of insufficient flexibility and magnitude to cope with all the aspects of the problem. Many developments in architecture have in part only been ways of trying to simplify so as to be able to control at a larger scale — standardization, notion of team-work etc. and these on the whole have led to a false simplification that results in standardized concepts that, when built, provide the large, unliveable 'Athens Charter' type of condition. The idea that a town can be planned by translating factors generalized from normal analysis techniques into models of statements involving thousands of people that are then shoved around on a board until they look right is an irresponsible act. There is nothing inherently wrong with the technique of shoving things around until they look right, most of the best small buildings have been done like that, but to use it at the scale that town-planning requires "is not perhaps as meaningless as a 'Triangular Circle' but much more so than ' a winged lion' ". To plan by means of trying to visualise an end result and then working towards it is becoming even less possible in architecture. We have reached the limit of our traditional techniques in control and communication and this in turn results in our having to think about design, and intuitive judgements made on the language of the building in terms of the process aspects of the language rather than the end-result aspects of the language. This shift in emphasis is what is crucial. It is part of the creative process and is that we change our focus from visual end result to the actual process stated in some way or other. The process aspect, magnitude and flexibility of systems, is most probably best explored in terms of already known disciplines but to translate these into a buildable language requires an act of intuitive decision which has to be made on the unit without compromising aspects of the end result, which must be comprehensible at certain predetermined stages and its properties at those stages known beforehand. This shift in what our intuitive judgement focuses on will change the complete range of ideas of what constitutes an adequate environment in ways that we cannot determine until we have actually taken the step. Our only guide as to the viability of this change is by seeing changes that parallel this in other fields and the effect already shown in them, increased ability but also an alienation that affects all the values the workers have. It has the quality of a dimensional change that warps all we have previously known and so affects every part of our concerns, even those most familiar.

*Buildings in Holland by Duiker and Bijvoet in the early '30s.

The language of the Duiker buildings is not so very different from that of the Leicester building. This does not make either any less viable. To what extent is it the result of a similar way of problem solving?

Traditionally we use a symbol system that approximates the actual disposition of those things being symbolised in scale and in relative position. This is obviously a very good way of working but we have to know much more about the scope and limits of this system. We also use it for exploration, control and communication. The actual way in which we "think" when designing has much to do with the fact that we use this system. Once we start "thinking" in terms of process this system becomes very limited.

One of the dangers of drawings is that, because they approximate the end result, they are often treated as ends in themselves. Especially at schools the tendency seems to be to treat drawings as things having visual value of their own accord and the value of the final project is assessed only as far as these drawings please aesthetically. The result seems to be the universal phenomenon of students rebelling against the drawing of pretty drawings, perspectives etc. by either drawing ugly drawings, perspectives etc, or by not drawing at all, all equally meaningless but quite understandable. Granted that there is pleasure derived from producing a drawing that is a rough approximation of a single aspect of what will finally be a complex object but let us be more aware of the difference. Surely the problem is that of working from experience and personal intuition and arriving at a poetic statement perceived mainly in visual terms without of necessity governing the final object by value judgements passed on visual aspects of symbols that are mainly there for communication.

It is necessary that we talk about what we want buildings to do. We must be able to do so amongst ourselves and with specialists in other fields. We need a language or languages to do so more effectively.

*Team 10 Primer. This is a set of collected intuitions that touches upon concepts that are well beyond our ability to work in terms of or even to speak of coherently. This increases its importance. A wealth of content rests here that needs the technique to mobilize and use it effectively and efficiently.

*Farm Buildings. Garkau. Hugo Haring. 1923. What Garkau, the early Aalto buildings, the Duiker buildings, Hunstanton and Leicester have in common, rather than what is different, is significant. The aesthetic implications, iconography almost, of the elevation illustrated is worth worrying about.

*If we perceive a group of things as being disorderly it usually means that the particular order is too complex to grasp. If it is too simple and "closes" it is free of tensions hence dull, or of limited value. Only a very small number of building types can be solved by means of the recognized classical systems of order.

*Degrees of order vary according to rates of change within the structure. At an elementary level it seems that the more rapid the change the easier it should be to replace units with improved versions. The cycles formed by each of these rates of change link in a certain way if the structure is coherent. These links are what we need to know about.

*Degrees of order relate to change in size in organic structures. We might find that in terms of comprehending a built unit the relationship between size and degree of order may be generalizable.

*The size change may be that of the person experiencing the unit; — man "sees" differently at 2, 30, 100, 2000 miles per hour;

—Pancho Guides's "Directors of companies are 10′ tall and typists are only 5′ tall";

—without being certain whether this relates at all one wonders about what Aalto does with the varying types of seating at Saynatsalo, the subtle differentiation between the various users. This is not a form of symbolism which seems to presuppose a valid and vital body of beliefs and myths that are generally accepted which is hardly the case today.

*Etc. which is after all quite obviously etc. but distinct from Etc.-etc. which seems to indicate etc. etc. . . . . .

These are by no means 'new' notions. They have been stated in many forms and many times by many generations. To work consistently in terms of them remains to be done. This plea for more method is not intended to devalue the act of intuitive decision. Its just that we have techniques for analyses that are ruthless, iconoclastic, accurate but do not have a complementary capacity for a synthesis that recognizes arbitrariness and fallibility yet provides a basis for a good life. The reality we deal with is one of infinite complexity, a joycean moziac, yet more than mozaic, linearly ambiguous . . . . and if a habit of patient research is formed by schools, if ways of exploration and checking are made the basis of research and the limits and scope of varying disciplines are known it may lead to a condition of solving our formal problems in which, if the problem can be stated clearly, it can lead to an occasional magnificence that has a validity and by this very act becomes less arbitrary, if not archetypal, for the length of these concerns that may work out a particular in that which is the human condition.

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"-that begins with an M, such as mouse-traps, and the moon, and memory, and muchness — you know, you say 'things are much of a muchness' — did you ever see such a thing as a drawing of a muchness?"

"Really, now you ask me", said Alice, very much confused "I don't think . ." "Then you should'nt talk", said the Hatter".

December 1963.

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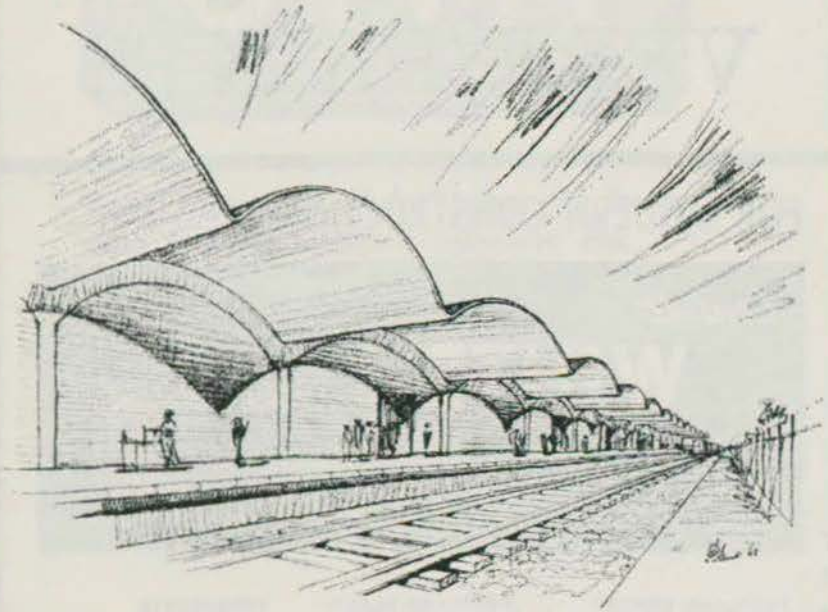

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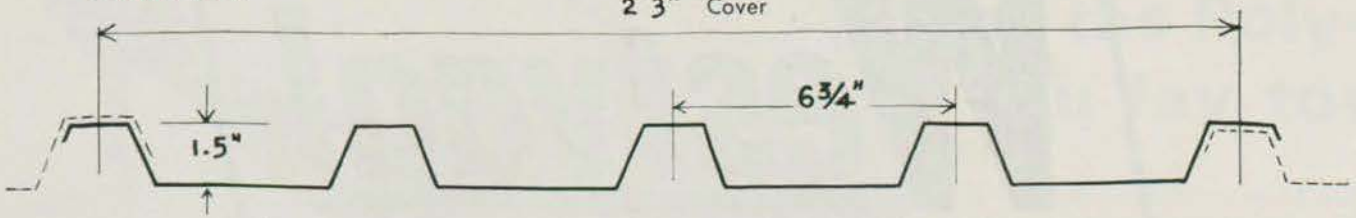

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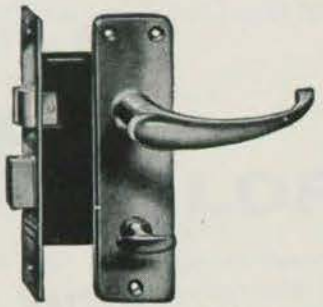

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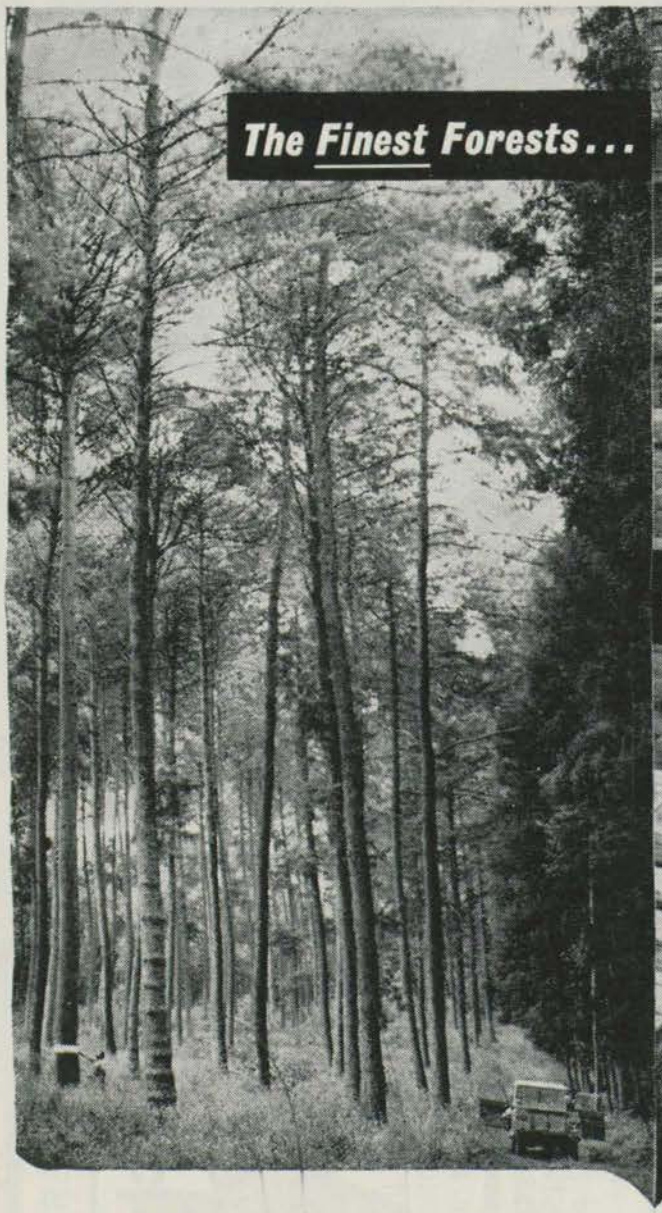
A lifetime of wear cannot age this floor. After years of service Poly-Flor will look as new as the day it was laid. Poly-Flor's extreme recoverability from indentations keeps it mark-free. Even the marbled colours go right through and last as long as Poly-Flor lasts. What's more, Poly-Flor is non-crack, non-perish, non-blister, non-stretch and non-shrink!

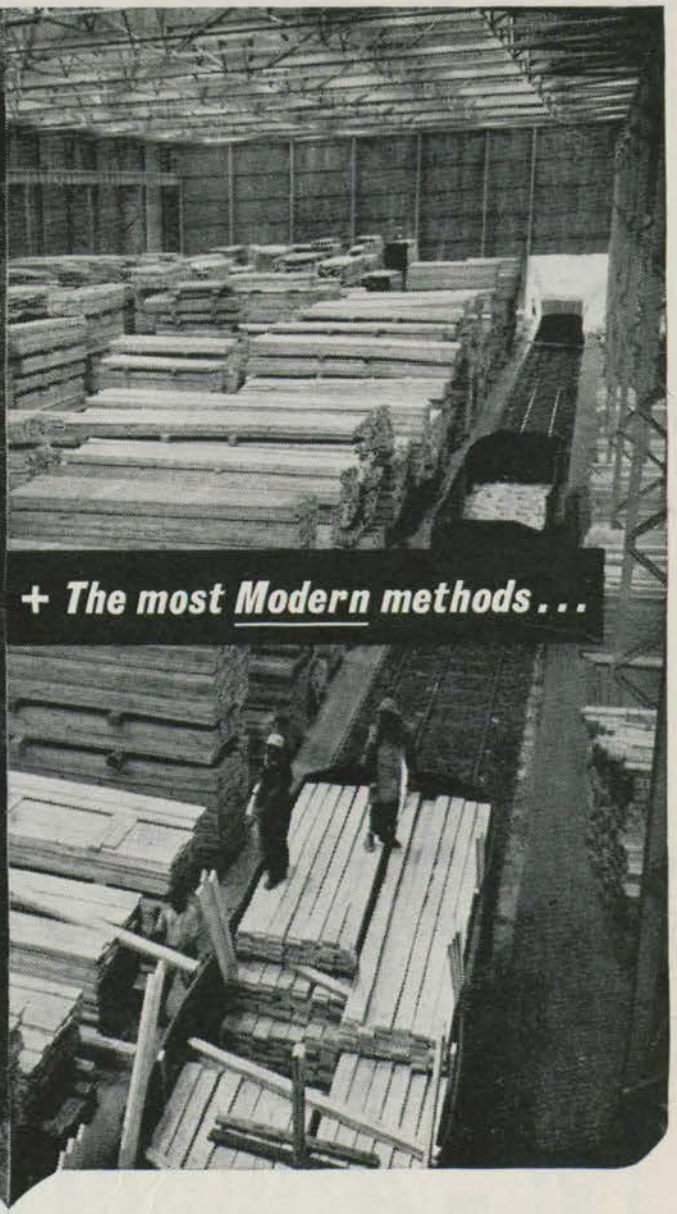
Attractive as marble. Soft underfoot as rubber. Colourful as fresh paint. Luxurious as sprung wood. And as hard-wearing as any covering you can think of. Name the advantage you like in a flooring material — Poly-Flor is bound to have it! Why not give your floors Poly-Flor's luxurious look? You (and your children and their children) will be glad you chose Poly-Flor.

POLY-FLOR

The non-crack floor that shrugs off dents! In 29 different colours. A gauge for every traffic density. Conforms to BSS 3261.

Grant 5808





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