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THE SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

The Journal of the Transvaal, Natal and Orange Free State Provincial Institutes of South African Architects and the Chapter of South African Quantity Surveyors.

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Composition • Seville

Photo / Colin Sinclair

MODERN METHODS IN ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE

In a recent issue we drew attention to what appears to be a serious state of affairs in the architectural profession and quoted a number of cases which had been brought to our notice from time to time. This was done with the hope that those members of the profession who are guilty of such irregularities might abstain from such practices in the future and, further, that those members of the general public, who are interested in our professional welfare, might realise that the profession is aware of what is going on and is determined to put a stop to it.

Such publicity, which we agree is not always pleasant, is not uncommon in other professions, and it is always a healthy sign that these professions are wide awake and not apathetic as ours appears to be.

It seems, however, that our views are not shared by members of the profession in the other provinces, as is indicated by two articles which appeared in the March issue of the "Architect, Builder and Engineer," and which we publish below.

We have little to say about the first article, entitled "A Regrettable Attitude," but will leave it to members of the profession to form their own opinions of the expressions used by the writer. In the second article, however, there are certain statements which must, and will, be seriously challenged, as they are a direct reflection on the younger members of our profession, and, if widely circulated, will do an incalculable amount of harm. One can hardly believe that such statements are made by a "prominent" South African architect, as is stated, but, if so, we sincerely hope that the fullest enquiry will be made into the matter.

A REGRETTABLE ATTITUDE

(From the Architect, Builder and Engineer)

Our leader this month, which is from the pen of a prominent South African architect who is an occasional but valued contributor, deals with a matter which shows a regrettable attitude on the part of confreres with whom we are by no means anxious to disagree.

We all make mistakes, but there is one mistake regarding which we should be constantly on our guard, namely, that of supposing that mere destructive criticism can under any circumstances be helpful.

The bird that fouls its own nest is apt not only to make things uncomfortable for the rest of the family but to become itself both uncomfortable and besmirched.

It is said of one ancient city that its streets are kept clean because all the inhabitants sweep before their own doorsteps and we have seen in our travels many towns that are kept clean, wholesome and attractive in just that way.

No professional or, for that matter, any other kind of man, has any right to sully the fair name and fame of his calling and his fellows in such a fashion as to bring that calling into public contumely.

Abuses of the kind alleged ought to be dealt with in Committee, and the S.A. Architects Registration Act and the regulations thereunder give ample scope.

What are the Vigilance Committees of our various Provincial Institutes doing ?

If the abuses complained of exist—and we have no doubt that they do exist to some extent by reason of the fact that we have protection of title only—then they should be dealt with firmly and at once.

None of us is anxious to cry "Peace, Peace ! when there is no Peace !" but all who love their craft and reflect upon its shortcomings know well enough that to eat dirt and then to sing about it is not the proper way to achieve cleanliness either in others or for ourselves.

Perusal of the allegations made makes it clear that there is a good deal of animus and prejudice behind them and in as far as reference is made almost specifically to individuals who cannot defend themselves they are in the highest degree reprehensible.

We commend to those who speak evilly of their craft a consideration of Quinctitian's (sic) bitter aphorism, "Maledicus a malefico non distat nisi occasione."

We are far from saying that this dictum fits the issues and persons commented on, but the common saying that if you fling mud some of it is apt to stick to you has an uncanny and annoying echo in experience. But that is quite enough about a very unsavoury matter.

●

MODERN METHODS

(Architect Builder and Engineer)

The craze for being "modern" appears to be finding expression in ways other than the design and construction of the erections which, in the name of art, have been, in recent years, forced on the attention of the public. It would appear to reasonable folk that much of the craze finds expression in gross breaches of good feeling, calculated to wound the susceptibilities of those accustomed to follow honoured and honourable traditions of the past.

Unfortunately, this entire lack of appreciation of the feeling of others is manifesting itself in the inter-relationships of our professional lives. As a result, our professional boat is fast drifting into a sea of doubt and suspicion.

In "The South African Architectural Record" of February last an article entitled "Modern Methods in Practice" calls for comment. The author follows the modern method of writing what he thinks apparently without any thought of others. Possibly in recounting to us the ghastly professional sins of Mr. X in contrast with the saintly behaviour of Mr. Y, he is under the impression that he has been of service to the profession. Has he paused to think of the harm done through the washing of dirty linen —and there is dirty linen in every household— in public. Surely there is a time and place where the irregularities which occur in all professions should be discussed and dealt with. One of the elementary principles in life is to keep to ourselves inherent troubles and difficulties, for it should be realised that if everyone shouted his troubles from the housetop life would be intolerable.

Has the author considered the effect of his article on the public mind ? Surely, after reading of the failings and shortcomings of Mr. X and others the man on the street must think architecture in South Africa a cheap and nasty profession. And what must building owners think ? Is it any wonder that they are turning to construction companies for the carrying out of building projects and avoiding the time-honoured procedure ?

Apart from this entire lack of good taste and wisdom, the author of the article in question attacks, in what he must know to be an unfair manner, officials in public employ. He must know that officials are not permitted to reply, no matter how deeply they may be wounded by scurrilous attacks on their honour and integrity. It is hardly sportsmanlike to hit a man if his hands are tied. Apart from this attack on officials, there is the suggestion that certain municipal authorities are guilty of serious breaches of faith in lending plans of buildings to unscrupulous individuals for the purpose of plagiarism. Possibly the officials and departments referred to will treat with contempt all that has been said (without proof) about them, but this does not alter the fact that the attack is made unfairly and in an unsportsmanlike manner inimical to the interests of all concerned. In this connection, the case cited in regard to municipal authorities is difficult to follow, in that no two sites are identical and how plans for one can apply to another is not clear.

In the same number of "The South African Architectural Record" a full report is given of a meeting of the Transvaal Provincial Institute of Architects held on the 18th February, where another wail of woe is presented in a manner even more unguarded and unwise, to which the foregoing comments apply with added force. Is the Institute justified in publishing such unbalanced expressions of opinion ? They represent the position from a very narrow and distorted angle. If successful practitioners are to be looked upon as a lot of blackguards by junior practitioners and vilified as necessarily obtaining work by thievish methods, our profession has indeed become modernised with a vengeance. Has the young practitioner entirely lost sight of the fact that senior architects are mostly appointed because of experience, which rightly or wrongly the building owner values far beyond mere academic qualifications ? Has the junior architect reflected that his training to-day in university, instead of office, adds point to the fact that the graduate from the university

usually makes the public pay in more ways than one for his lack of practical experience ? Is not the wail of woe from junior practitioners the direct outcome of the giving of too much significance to examination results rather than to performance of practical professional work ?

Our university system is on trial and it has yet to be proved successful. At the moment it appears to be failing lamentably to produce professional qualifications of the kind which enable young practitioners to enjoy the confidence of the public. The young architect of to-day appears to be very much in the hands of other experts and is not really competent to take full charge of building contracts entrusted to his care. Is this not where the shoe is pinching ? The truth is that the architects trained a quarter of a century ago as articled pupils before commencing practice were in contact for five to seven years or more with builders and artisans employed on buildings. In those surroundings they learnt to talk to a builder and understand practical performance, and thus became intimately associated with the erection of buildings. Architects trained in this manner learned to control and direct the fulfilment of a building contract in a vital and effective way unknown to neophytes of to-day who are trained in a different fashion. The public knows this, and, in what it conceives to be its interests, prefers to engage the architect with practical knowledge of his job. The time is fast approaching when all architects will be required to possess the practical knowledge necessary to control their work. If they want to win and maintain the confidence of the public and establish practice on sound lines, they must be equipped to command the respect of the building owner and everyone else associated with their work. They must be captains of their ships, capable of weathering the bitterest of business storms without, if necessary, the aid of those rightly under their command. How many graduates from modern universities are capable of doing this ? Is it their fault ? Possibly not ! Maybe the senior architects are to blame for agreeing to the training of the youths in the profession being entrusted to those having little or no sympathy with practical needs. We do not suggest a return to the old system of articled pupilage, but we do submit that the training of architects to be effective should have practical as well as academic ends in view.

At the time of going to press we have received a copy of a letter which we print below.

To the Editor,
"Architect, Builder and Engineer,"
Capetown.

Sir,

I feel that your editorial comment, "Modern Methods," which appeared in your March issue, calls for a strong and prompt reply, both on general and on detailed grounds. Although this article obviously carries with it the official approval of your journal, yet it certainly appears highly desirable to me that the "prominent South African architect" who contributes the editorial should emerge from his rather undignified anonymity. On grounds of general policy alone, the fact that you have allowed such strongly and tactlessly worded sentiments to appear under the heading "Editorial Comment" will certainly occasion considerable surprise in professional circles. I say this because your contributor has not failed to attack in bitter terms the editor of the "South African Architectural Record," a man who occupies a high and respected position in academic and professional circles, and who may, even in the most biased judgment, be acquitted of the charges of any kind of professional prejudice or animus.

But the comment in question contains so many irrelevant, indeed, thoroughly confused statements, that it demands a critical analysis point by point.

In the first place, it seems almost unnecessary to point out that the so-called craze for being modern is a phrase which bears no relationship to the serious and most arduous effort being made by the younger generation of architects to bring into the contemporary consciousness

the sense and true meaning of architecture as the social and intellectual background of civilisation. And they expect, at least, a decent sympathy from their senior colleagues for a task which is, quite obviously, on the grounds of time alone, outside the scope of the ability or understanding of those gentlemen.

To deal with the " susceptibilities " of our fellow architects—here again I must dispute the premises upon which the writer bases his statements. The " South African Architectural Record " is a journal with a purely professional circulation, and in no way could be named accessible to the general public. It is, therefore, an eminently suitable medium for expressing relevant criticisms of the profession within the profession. Apart from this fact, it must be submitted that, on ethical grounds, the ills that exist in the architectural world, if of sufficiently serious nature, call for fearless, outspoken and unprejudiced comment. And this is precisely what this editorial sets out to achieve, with what success may be judged from the quite righteously outraged sentiments here under criticism. At any rate, I think it is established beyond doubt that there is no irresponsible " shouting from the housetops," but rather a carefully conceived and quite deliberate and authoritative setting forth of views arrived at by research and enquiry over a long period. What is more, the article has been provoked by a state of affairs little short of scandalous. I think I speak for the younger architects when I say that we are gratified by this most serious attempt to counteract the subversive and destructive influence so rife in our profession to-day.

As far as the criticism of officials is concerned, it appears clear that the mere fact that a man occupies a public position does not render him immune from censure, when merited. On the contrary, his very position renders him the more liable. It is certain, however, that no word would have been written against him had not ample proof been available. I am assured that nothing has been written without a careful survey of the facts as known, nor without good and sufficient evidence as to the truth of every allegation. In the light of these facts, I think phrases such as " unsporting " or " bad taste " may be considered futile and ill-directed. I might add, by way of a note, that innumerable sites in Johannesburg present precisely identical problems to the lazy or inefficient architect.

In regard to the report of the meeting of the Transvaal Provincial Institute, your contributor is under a complete misapprehension. The occasion was a special general meeting of the Provincial Institute to discuss the difficulties of the junior practitioner. As such, it had the full powers and authority within the constitution of the Institute, and its resolutions carried full weight with the Provincial Committee. Many of the most respected and eminent members of the profession were present. A striking and forceful address by one of the junior members was followed with deep interest, and the motion put before the meeting consequent upon this speech was adopted unanimously. Incidentally, the attack contained in the paper was upon a section only of the profession, and, as such, was more than justifiable. The reference in your comment to the vilification of " successful practitioners," therefore, was misplaced, unless by " successful " is understood unscrupulous and unprofessional.

At this stage of your editorial there appears, in the most inconsequential fashion imaginable, and without any bearing whatsoever on any of the previous statements, a sneering and truculent attack on the junior architect, coupled, presumably, with his University training. Most of us were under the impression that what was a perennial dispute within the profession regarding the training of young architects—architects, be it noted, not building apprentices—was a dead letter. But here we have the controversy revived is a most vicious manner. I am not in a position to talk of the architectural schools at the Cape, but I think I may put forth, with some assurance, an assessment of the value and standing of the Department of Architecture at the University of the Witwatersrand, and of the practising architects graduated from that Department. It is no less than a scurrilous statement, and little less than libel, to say that " the graduate from the University usually makes the public pay in more ways than one for his lack of practical experience." To let this statement go unchallenged would be a shameful neglect of duty on the part of a graduate of the University, and I openly challenge your contributor to prove the

truth of this most grave and libellous allegation. Far from our University system being unproved, I might say that we have, in this short space of time, established a fine tradition—a tradition of practical efficiency as well as of the highest ideals and aims of a great art. One of our earliest graduates is now President of the Transvaal Provincial Institute, a position attained, very obviously, not on the qualities of the young practitioner set forth in your editorial. Moreover, three other members of the Provincial Committee are graduates—illustrating no lack of professional responsibility and achievement. In addition, there is a growing body of work of considerable architectural merit for which the junior members of the profession—graduates from the Department of Architecture—are responsible. Does this represent the "lamentable failure" to which your contributor makes reference? There is more spleen in these loose and irresponsible phrases than a fair or accurate mind would allow. Enough has been shown to illustrate in your editorial a complete lack of knowledge of the facts of your case, and this is a most reprehensible and dangerous attitude on your part.

As for the specialisation of the various subsidiary elements in our building work, this is a process to which older practitioners, as well as younger, are subject. It merely indicates, in fact, a change in constructional methods from those subsisting five and twenty years ago, during which time, I presume, your contributor had the advantage of being trained or articled.

The troubles of the younger practitioners are, I think, of a somewhat different complexion from those indicated. It is not his training that is at fault, nor is it his failure to gather the rich experience of building contracting, but rather the inertia and short-sightedness, not to say the ignorance, of some of those within his own profession, who will neither acknowledge a changing world, nor grant to those who follow them in time, some of the respect which they give so freely to a ready-made tradition.

The attack on the teachers at the architectural schools is the most easily answered of all. One has merely to point to the results I have enumerated above, and to acknowledge the high standing of the School within the University itself—a remarkable enough tribute considering its youth—to demonstrate beyond doubt a success little dreamed of when the School was founded by the most admirable perseverance and foresight of a group of our senior architects.

As a final answer to criticism on practical grounds, I should like to point out that the Master Builders' Association of the Witwatersrand have recently thrown open to competition the design of their new headquarters in Johannesburg. But they have limited the competition, and limited it to the junior members only of the architectural profession. This—as an expression of confidence—must carry weight even with the most prejudiced and fanatical of the opponents and critics of the architects of a new age.

I sincerely trust that you will extend the courtesy of your columns to this letter, as I cannot stress too strongly the importance that attaches to the confidence of not only the general public, but also of our senior colleagues, in the younger group of architects, of which I am fortunate enough to be a member.

Yours faithfully,

Norman Hanson,
B. Arch. (Rand) A.R.I.B.A.



Mute Witness Algeciras

WE WENT TO SPAIN

By HELEN WHITE

In the space of a month we had journeyed through Northern Italy to Switzerland, then to England and back to France. The fact that we had accomplished the major part of our tour in so short a time was of no account. Elated, yet bewildered by so many new sights, sounds and smells, we had forgotten the meaning of time in terms of hours and days, for we counted its passage by emotion and experience. Our last experience in Paris was a highly stimulating visit to Le Corbusier's Cite de Refuge. Indeed, we were so intoxicated by this visit that we left for Spain that night, regarding the train merely as a good place to rest in. This was the ideal way to go to Spain —time was meaningless, we had forgotten that our normal lives had been governed and hampered by social relationship—we were now each one a nameless wanderer, pausing for a moment to watch and then passing on.

So, physically tired, but otherwise lighthearted and casual, we came to Spain. After an all-night journey from Paris, we woke out of a fitful, stuffy sleep to find ourselves in Irun, at the foot of the Pyrenees. From Irun we went to Burgos, the capital of old Castile and home of Cid Campeador. We had been told of the Gothic cathedral, the arch of Santa Maria and the Carthusian monastery at Burgos, but neglected these frigid and austere relics for the rival attractions of our hotel. The Hotel Moderno deserves description for the reason that it so aptly illustrates the easy irresponsibility of the Spanish. It had vast numbers of cheap fittings installed, none of which worked. We turned on taps, unlatched windows and switched on lights. But the results were depressing: no gleaming rush of water from the taps; the windows were either nailed shut or stuck with paint, and only very occasionally did the electric globes respond to an attempt at working the switch. The bathroom taps suffered from a lack of water similar to those in our bedrooms, but as a compensation the bathroom was tiled in shades of purple. Passion in a bathroom is a novel idea. The culminating point was reached when we found the lift shooting up and down with such vigour that mere button pushing was of no avail, and the only means of stopping it seemed to be wild concerted screaming on the part of the feminine members of the hotel staff. Thus our introduction to Spain and the Spaniards.

From this atmosphere of icy mediævalism and incoherent efficiency we were transported to one of mysticism and dreams in the town of Avila. In the cathedral at Avila we found a mixture of Romanesque and Gothic architecture, a particularly interesting feature being the apse which is built into the town walls, most ingeniously making a pseudo watchtower. The sun came out at Avila, so we went for a walk round the town walls and listened to the hard snow cracking and breaking beneath our feet. At the main gate we turned round to look over the russet roofs of the town, packed together in an aimless and friendly muddle. It happened to be market day on the second day of our stay there, and we wandered from end to end of the market place, followed by inscrutable stares from the peasants. The men were apparently unmoved by the sight of us, but the women were more curious until we approached them, when they hid their faces in their shawls with

becoming modesty. The children were frankly inquisitive, following us everywhere and accompanying our every remark with mocking chatter. The market scene was woefully disappointing, yielding very little of that riotous colour we had hoped to find in the Spanish dress. Our first glimpse of colour was in the saddlebags the peasants used. Splendidly patterned in scarlet, cream and olive-green, they were either slung nonchalantly over the men's shoulders or, more humbly, over their donkey's backs. Enthralled though we were by the cobbled streets and shadowy eaves over silent windows, we had to leave Avila after two days' stay, a departure that came too soon for the more romantically-minded of our party. Packed tightly into a third-class compartment with broken down hidalgos, policemen and peasant women, we went through country covered in deep snow, passing from the Sierra des Gredos to the Sierra Nevada.

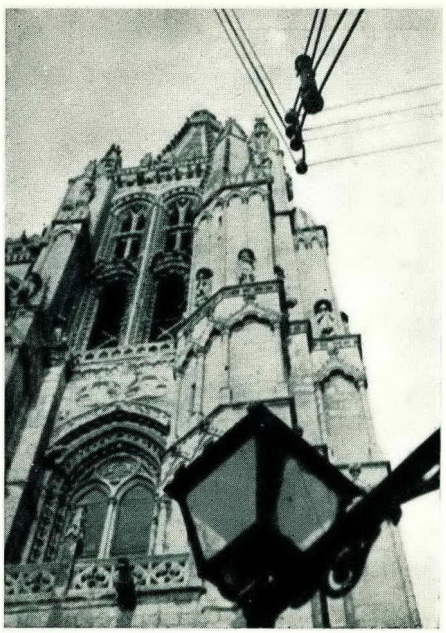
We paused on our journey to Madrid at Escurial to visit Philip the Second's monastery there. The monastery at Escurial is a tremendous structure, built in massive style without any merit in its monotony. Its vaults hold the bodies of the kings and queens of Spain in a glory of black and white marble caskets, while their offspring, at least those who died in childhood, and they were many, lie in a kind of over-iced cake. This was not a happy day.

Madrid greeted us more warmly than the towns of the north had done and, despite a few biting winds, we felt that perhaps we would soon see something of " sunny " Spain. Our first few hours in Madrid were spent in breathless excitement in the Prado, where we discovered Velasquez, El Greco and Goya, the nobleman, the fanatic and the revolutionary. Sober consideration of reproductions of their paintings cannot dispel a lingering echo of that excitement. Velasquez is the master to the Spaniard and they have a fine collection of his works—infantas, ambassadors and kings, who stare with grave imperturbability into space, all of them far too well-dressed and beautifully drawn to be aware of the mocking Goyas next door. The Grecos seemed vaguely reminiscent of Van Dyck's work, but only at first, for, being a non-Catholic and vaguely atheistical audience, we grew doubtful and embarrassed as we passed from spiritual ecstasy to frenzied religious prostration. Goya restored our balance, and while unhappy too, before his all too realistic scenes of spies defying death and of giants devouring the human race, we were soon at home with his delightfully cynical portraits of his king and queen and their court. Having read Karel Capek on Goya's Maja de Nuda :

" the modern revelation of sexuality . . . . "

we gazed at this, his only nude, with interest, but turned away sad and disappointed; it was a most proper piece. We emerged from the Prado to find that the title of the film, " The Barretts of Wimpole Street," had been changed to " The Virgins of Wimpole Street." The Spaniards are, beneath the surface, a very respectable people.

In Madrid we found our first example of " modern " architecture. The Capitol is built on a site overlooking one of the main streets leading down to the Puerta de Sol, " the Gate



Seville



View from Tower Seville



Cordoba

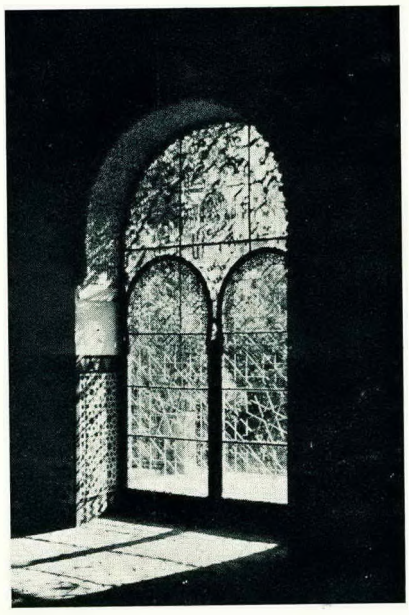
of the Sun, the centre of the world and the navel of Spain." A very happy-go-lucky building this, jerry-built and very full of tea-rooms; a friendly architectural mistake showing that Spain is essentially a pageant of past memories and will soon cease to be.

We now turned with eagerness to the south—Cordoba, Seville, Toledo, Granada. In Cordoba two of us shared a ground floor room opening on to a small square. When we woke on our first morning there we found the weekly market being held in our square. Our view of the market was obscured by the buttocks of a very robust donkey, who was doing his best to climb backwards through our window. It was at Cordoba that we first began to realise the gulf separating the Northern and the Southern Spaniard. Our guide, a Northern girl, had a way of saying " these Andalusians," which left us no doubts as to her opinion of them. Here in the South, time was absent-mindedly resting, that the winter sun might be savoured and that men might laze in the warmth so lavishly and colourfully bestowed on them. In the North one rested because it was obviously too cold to work. Cordoba possesses a huge mosque which was, after the overthrow of the Moors, converted into a Gothic cathedral. From the midst of row upon row of charming little horse-shoe arches that bound gaily up and down, rises a horror of Gothic vaults and piers. This grotesque combination of the pagan and the Christian is a cruel comment on the æsthetic products of Christianity.

From Cordoba we went to Seville, which we found enchanting and where we spent halcyon days wandering over the town. The art gallery we dismissed as too tedious after the more subtle flavours of the Prado. Instead we visited the taverns of Seville. At one, in the low quarter, which was no less filthy than the better class quarter, we struggled hard to eat roasted sparrows, but the sight of their pathetic little bald heads turned our wine to vinegar and we departed. Another tavern in the centre of the town and in the shadow of the Giralda was panelled in dark wood and plentifully hung with notices announcing that " It is forbidden to sing ! " In searching for flamenco dancers we wandered into noisesome dens and watched naked women sing songs that needed no knowledge of Spanish to understand. When our little guide's embarrassment grew too intense

we left our tavern and came out into the quiet streets and strolled about, hoping that the distant strum of guitars and mandolins that quivered down the alleys was not the sound of a hurdy-gurdy. Unfortunately it was, for Spain and Italy is the home of the hurdy-gurdy. Once we explored the oldest part of the town, Santa Cruz. There we stuck our heads through the wrought-iron bars of patio gateways to get a brief glimpse of bright blue fern-pots and of old women wandering about the paths among their fountains. But besides the remote loveliness of her cathedral and the swashbuckling melancholy of her taverns, Seville had a greater delight to offer us. Another remnant of the Moorish accession in Spain is the Alcazar in Seville. Of the stuff that dreams are made on, it can only be enjoyed in brief piercing moments, each one a blinding flash that brightens the eye and mind with a myriad of colours and sparkles. A visit to the Alcazar leaves an emotional chaos that defies setting to rights. It is best described as a vision of delicate arches and splendid rooms leading effortlessly one into the other, the whole being covered with a fine tracery of carved design coloured in tints of opal and turquoise. It was surely fashioned from the tears and laughter of the old world, mingled together with philosophic disregard of the hearts from which they were wrung. The result is a fastidiously coloured serenity that looks out on to the grand and majestic layout of a formal garden and then, with a dainty shrug, withdraws to a contemplation of the minute.

Granada seemed a miserable place after we had enjoyed the generously given delights of Seville. We found, however, that she was only more reserved than her bright wanton of a sister, and had just as much to give. The Alhambra at Granada gave us yet another example of Moorish magnificence, combining the fantasy of the Alcazar with a sombreness of its own. It grows out of a hill in the centre of the town and overlooks on one side the whole of Granada and the Sierra Nevada; on the other side it overlooks a range of hills which are catacombed with gipsy caves. The ramparts of the Alhambra are almost the most impressive part of the palace, being built in dull red stone and rising sheer from the face of the hill. Second to their heavy charm must be placed the bathroom, in the roof of which is a star-shaped hole, through which the Sultan used to peep at his wives bathing, in order that he might choose his favourite for the day. From the Alhambra we walked up to the Generalife or summer gardens, built by Yusuf the Third in the thirteenth century. These gardens should be surrounding the Alcazar in Seville. The fountains are cunningly placed so that they make shimmering arches of water over long lily pools, or form a quivering veil, through which can be seen an elusive picture of white pavilions and the sun shining on dark greenery. A visit to a gipsy cave completed our stay in Granada. About twenty-five people sat round the walls of the cave, which was about 15 feet square, the gipsies with looks of ferocious anticipation, ourselves no less anticipatory but rather more timid. After a few minutes they started making the most upsetting noise, some of them threw back their heads and emitted piercing shrieks, others beat their hands fiercely together, while the rest played the castonets with unabating



Window Alcaza Seville

vigour. When our heads were throbbing with great dynamic thumps and our ears were quite numb, one of the gipsy women dashed forward and danced. We had to watch no less than seven of them before we could rush out to the cool air and drink in the quietness of the Sierras—far away. The dancing ? Well, it has been described as violent, voluptuous and passionate, but we couldn't see it—the noise was too great !

We arrived at Algeciras two days before our boat was due to pick us up at Gilbraltar. Feeling unhappy and depressingly normal, we realised that fate had made fools of us. While we had been acting like disembodied sprites in an enchanted land, hours and days had gone past and we had nothing more to show for them than some worthless pottery, a barrel of olives and three pairs of saddle-bags. But sigh as we might, Gibraltar waited for us across the bay—Mrs. Grundy, sitting solidly in the blue of the Mediterranean, and beckoning us to return to civilisation, culture and cleanliness.



Boats alongside

GIBRALTAR

PSYCHOLOGY AND ARCHITECTURE

By KURT JONAS

In the following paper Mr Jonas carries his discussion of the theoretical aspects of architecture a step further. A concluding article will follow.

No word is misused more frequently than the word psychology. "Science of the soul" is what it actually means. But since "soul" has acquired too much of a lyrical flavour, one would better speak of "science of the mind." In any case, it is not synonymous with mind or mentality. It is the mind reflecting on the mind, but scientifically, not philosophically.

Science lives on facts. Facts must be established. To establish them research is needed. As far as architecture is concerned, this research of the psychological science has not yet started. It is up to the psychologist to do this research. But it is the task of the architect to show why and where architecture needs the help of psychology. It is up to him to establish the fundamental relationship between psychology and architecture.

This is an "essay" towards that end. Psychology, approaching architecture, has to deal with two groups of problems, the one centering in the mind of the architect, the other in the mentality of the public. We shall discuss their implications in turn.

The Creator.

In concluding the attempt at a philosophy of architecture we left open the crucial question: How can the æsthetic and the practical aspects of architecture be connected and combined? We only stated that a functional relationship must be established in the human mind. The architect, as the creator, has to go through a psychic process of equating the two in terms of a third, superior force, which in itself bears no relation to either aspect. This we call the psychological "point of correlation."

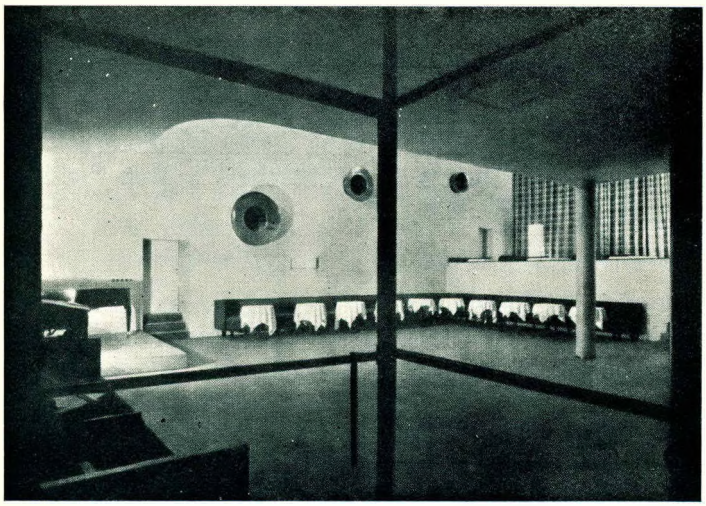
But that is not yet the main difficulty. The equation in the mind of the architect is a fairly simple affair, as will be shown later. But in order to make this equation of the two aspects of architecture effective, it must be experienced by the public: looking at buildings, living in houses, walking through towns. This public must be able to appreciate the two aspects as simultaneous expressions of a twofold problem and also as expressing each other. It is here that the main difficulty arises and that the architect needs the help of the psychologist.

The architect: He works in a certain material. He builds his work up of solids. He combines solids and hollows of different size and shape in order to achieve a definite spatial effect. He may use any shapes, any combinations. But if he then tries, as an afterthought, to bring in the practical side, a compromise will invariably be the result. Not unity will have been achieved, but alliance. And in art an alliance is always a mesalliance.

On the other hand, if the architect considers the practical side only, trusting the æsthetics to come automatically, he may encounter bitter disappointments. For things useful may be things beautiful, by chance; they are not so by necessity. (Here lies the source of error, responsible for the shortcomings of, say, Gropius' work, compared with that of Le Corbusier or Mies van der Rohe.) And beware of the architect who relies on the application of "beautifying ingredients"—be it orders or only costly materials—for æsthetic effects. He will bring forth not a compromise, but a masquerade—which is worse.

Which, then, is the superior force, co-ordinating the two aspects? It is in the architect, we stated. It is a quality of his mind: discipline.

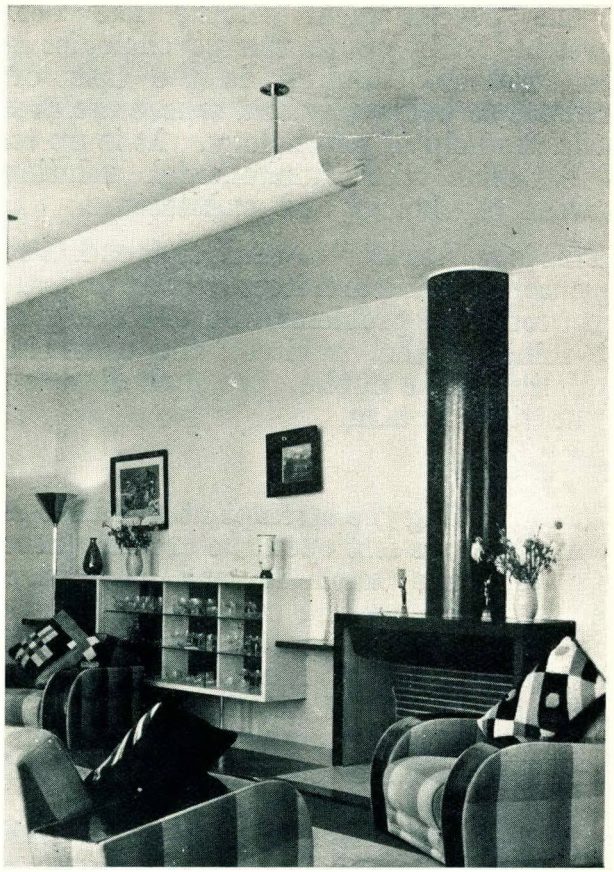
Take away from a painter all but two or three colours. First he will seem helpless. But if his mind is disciplined he will adapt himself to the new conditions and will create work not less but perhaps more admirable for its very economy of means of expression. Now imagine a painter who knows that all but two or three



Dance Hall at Kitzbuehel
Welzenbacher

Note how in these two examples the functional shapes of different heating elements (flue and warm air inlets) are used to achieve distinct spatial effects

photo George Abbott



House Stern Johannesburg
Martienssen, Fassler and Cooke

of his colours will lose their brilliance with time. Many compromises are open to him : he may use little of the undurable colours; or he may use dull colours only, so that the loss of brilliance will be less noticeable; he may even, without bothering about the ultimate destiny of his work, use the colours indiscriminately, for momentary effect only.

But he may, and herein would consist the only uncompromising attitude, definitely restrict himself to the use of the durable colours. For the value of an artistic creation does not depend on the mass nor on the variety of materials used. It depends solely on the versatility, originality and discipline of the creative mind. Hence the artist can restrict himself in the choice of his materials without hereby adopting a compromising attitude.

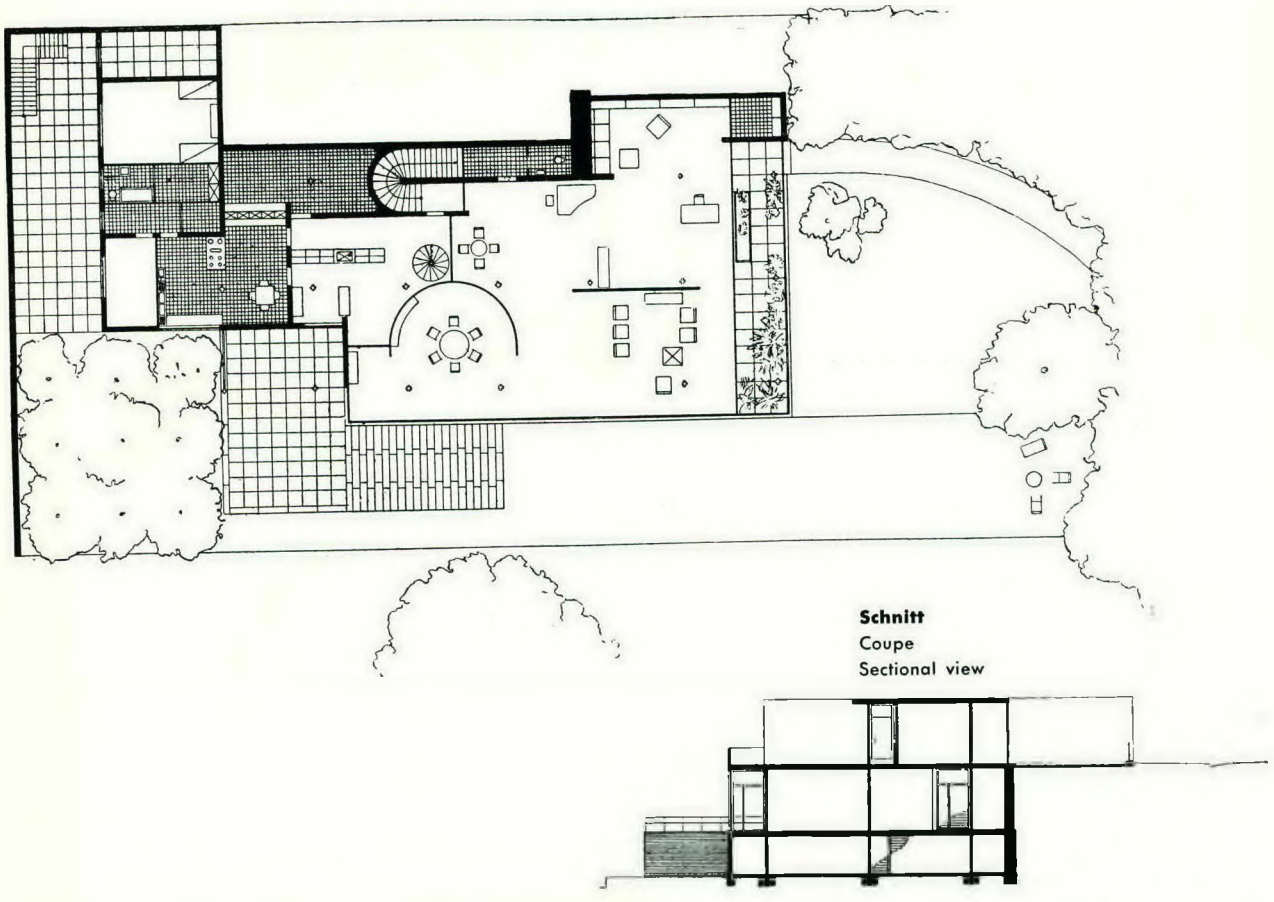
To the architect whom we have definitely shown to be an artist this rule applies in all its importance. For to restrict his materials is the self-discipline of the architect.

Of all the shapes and combinations of solids and hollows, the architect will use only those which are clear, practical, simple expressions of the particular purpose they serve. This will leave quite a considerable choice, because to every practical problem there will be a number

of more or less equally good solutions. And each complex of practical problems can be solved by a number of equally workable arrangements. But of course the choice is restricted to an infinitely small number of possibilities compared with the amount of shapes, bodies and arrangements which are left outside. But just in restricting himself uncompromisingly to this limited material and creating out of it all those spatial expressions which are the essence of architecture, just in this self-restriction the architect will have to show the master mind.

It should be repeated: the architectural quality as such does not depend on this restriction. But to be able to build at all, that is, to create works of architecture in their proper material, not academically, it is necessary to combine the practical and the architectural aspect. The only uncompromising, therefore true and artistically allowable way of doing this, is by restricting oneself to create spatially out of only the practically workable material.

And does not this self-restriction really give that equation, the necessity of which was shown in the previous essay? Must not the æsthetics of an architectural arrangement express the practical process behind it, if it is but created out of the expressions of practical processes? And must not the practical



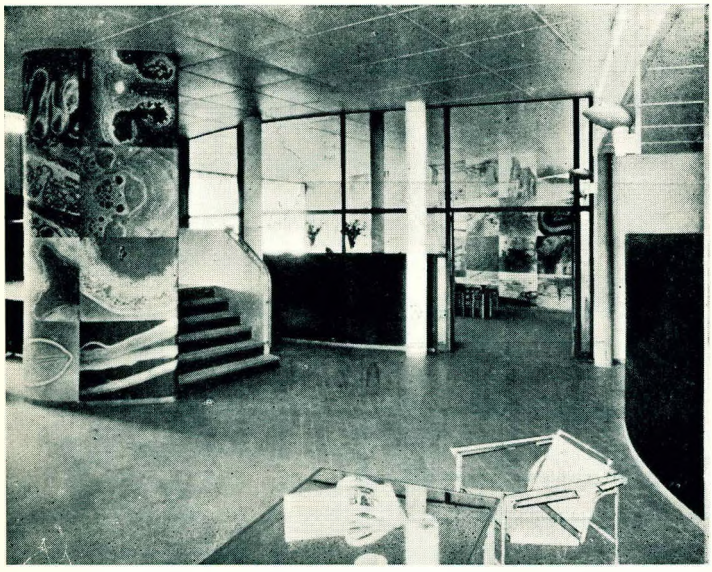
House Tugendhat, Brno. Mies Van der Rohe

process appear to be the very outcome of the æsthetics, if it is only in its æsthetic state, as spatial relationship, that we perceive it ? So it is indeed achieved : the two aspects have been equated; they do express each other and their relationship is a functional one. And this by a process which cannot be derived from the principles of architecture nor from the necessities of practicability. It has been achieved by a process in the mind of the architect, by an act of deliberate will, superior to both aspects. The correlating force: self-restriction, discipline.

The Public.

Unfortunately mankind does not perceive things as they are. And the reactions of people to the same objects vary considerably. Not even the individual reacts in the same way at different stages of his life, in different surroundings, under different circumstances. More complications still : the reactions of the individual will be different and contradictory during the process of perception. He may, consciously and intellectually, rejoice in an object, which his buried and subconscious self abhors. He may fully grasp one aspect of an object whilst an inner resistance, fed by sources which have no direct connection whatever with the object in question, prevents him from understanding the other aspects. He may for the same or similar reasons perceive a unity as a contradiction or vice-versa. He may see relations where there are none, and he may fail to see the most evident connections. How is the architect to foresee in which way the public is going to react when confronted with his creations ? And on these reactions the success of the architect will depend. Not the financial success only, but also the artistic success. If a work of art does not bring forth in the onlooker those sensations with which the artist has imbued it, then it fails. Hence the not superficial, but fundamental need for the help of the psychologist.

Let us recognise this need quite frankly and let us turn to the psychologist for his help. Let us write to him an



Hall and Library Swiss Pavilion
Le Corbusier

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OPEN LETTER TO THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Dear Psychologist,

The architect needs your help. You must do some research for him, a research which will be of the greatest interest and importance not only for the art which it is our endeavour to create, but also for the science which is yours. For you will not deny that men, living in houses, visiting churches, theatres, schools and clubs, are profoundly influenced by the spatial atmosphere penetrating the very air they are breathing. You will not deny that the type of rooms a child spends the first years of its life in may have the most beneficial or the most disastrous effect on the modelling of its mental make-up. That is to say, if you, as a psychologist, are not only interested in abstract science (and if you were, you would not be a psychologist), but also in the mental welfare of man, you must realise that the research we want you to do is a necessity.

Your first argument will be that men as such do not exist. Nor does there exist anything which could be called the normal for all ages and lands. We know that. But we are not interested in all ages, neither past nor future. We build for men of to-day. And we build in a definite country, for men of this country (though we hesitate to believe in a fundamental



Interior of Church of Oberhausen (model) Welzenbacher

difference of reaction in such a comparatively homogeneous civilisation as the European-North American is, to which this, our country, belongs). The second argument I foresee is that concerning associations of ideas. You will agree that such a thing as a normal or average association of ideas exists only within the narrow limits of common education, whilst generally it is probably the most individual of all features of perception. Hence the major part of it will be outside the sphere of group-psychology with which you will have to deal. Moreover, dangerous as associations of ideas are to the unprejudiced appreciation of architecture, there is a way of overcoming them to a large degree by an architectural means, namely, standardisation, convention, which we will discuss in a concluding article.

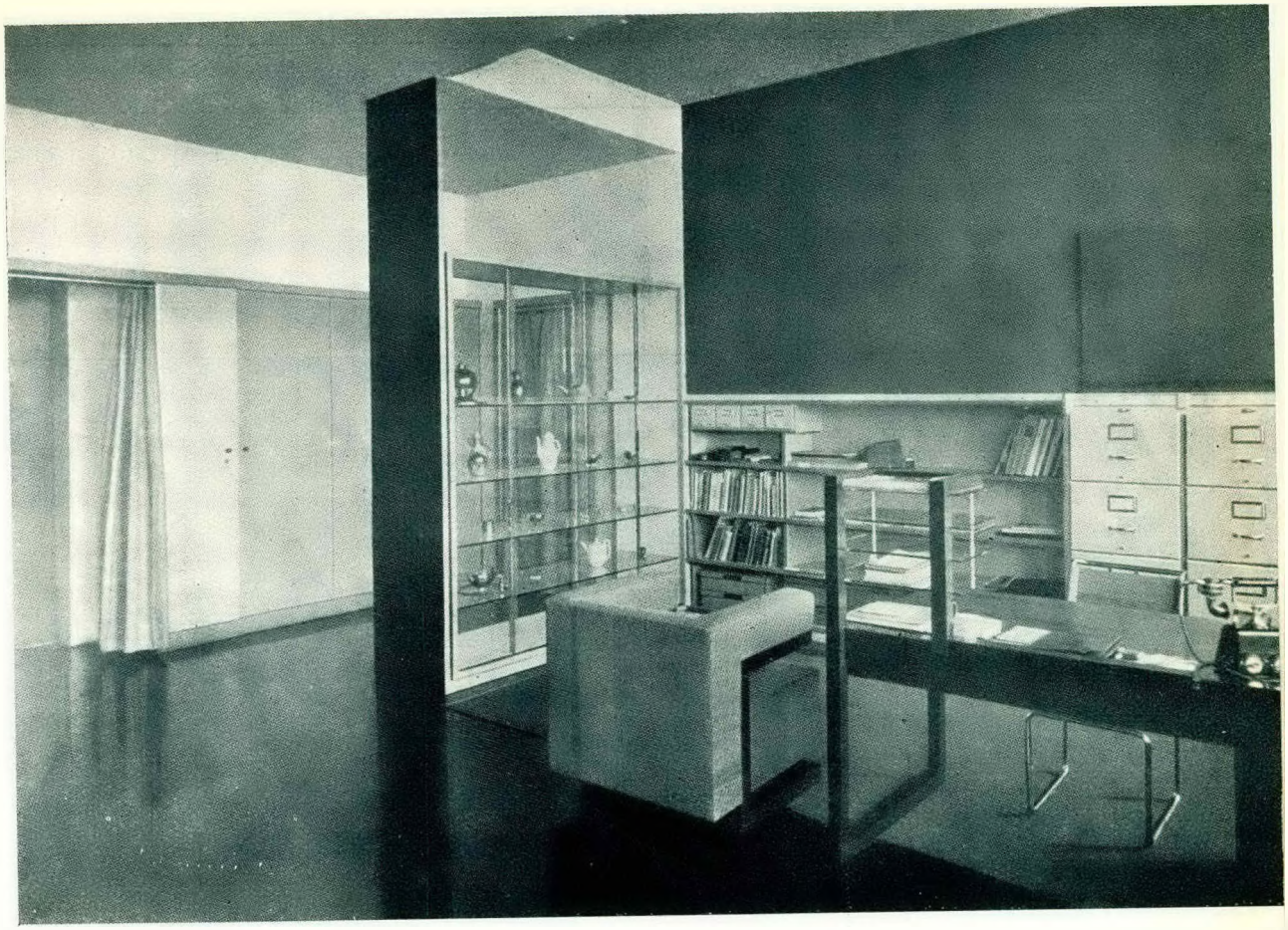
Therefore the whole sphere of associations may be discarded. If you, the psychologist, record and analyse the reaction of a man towards different architectural creations, you will be able, to a certain extent, to eliminate out of these emotional and intellectual reactions those elements which are due to an association of ideas. If that is so, then there is a possibility of establishing an "average reaction" of the normal man, woman and child of our age and our country towards definite and different architectural expressions of our age and country.

You see, that is the research we want you to do. This research will have to be carried on with two different methods—intensively (taking, as a Johannesburg psychologist put it, a transverse section) and extensively, that is, taking a longitudinal section.

The intensive research means the detailed analysis of a small group of people over a long period of time. Except where it belongs to the group of standard associations common to the entirety of a country with common history, education, geography, etc., everything due to personal associations of ideas must be eliminated. "Like a prison," "like a forest," "like a pigeon-house": these are reactions which do not concern us. But: I feel dizzy if I look for a long time at a certain curved wall or: I fear to be crushed if I stand underneath this porte-cochère; or: I cannot think in a room with a colour-combination, of, let us say, red and green. All these are reactions which cannot be discarded. And it is of the utmost importance to the architect to know whether or not something like such average reactions towards definite architectural expressions exist.

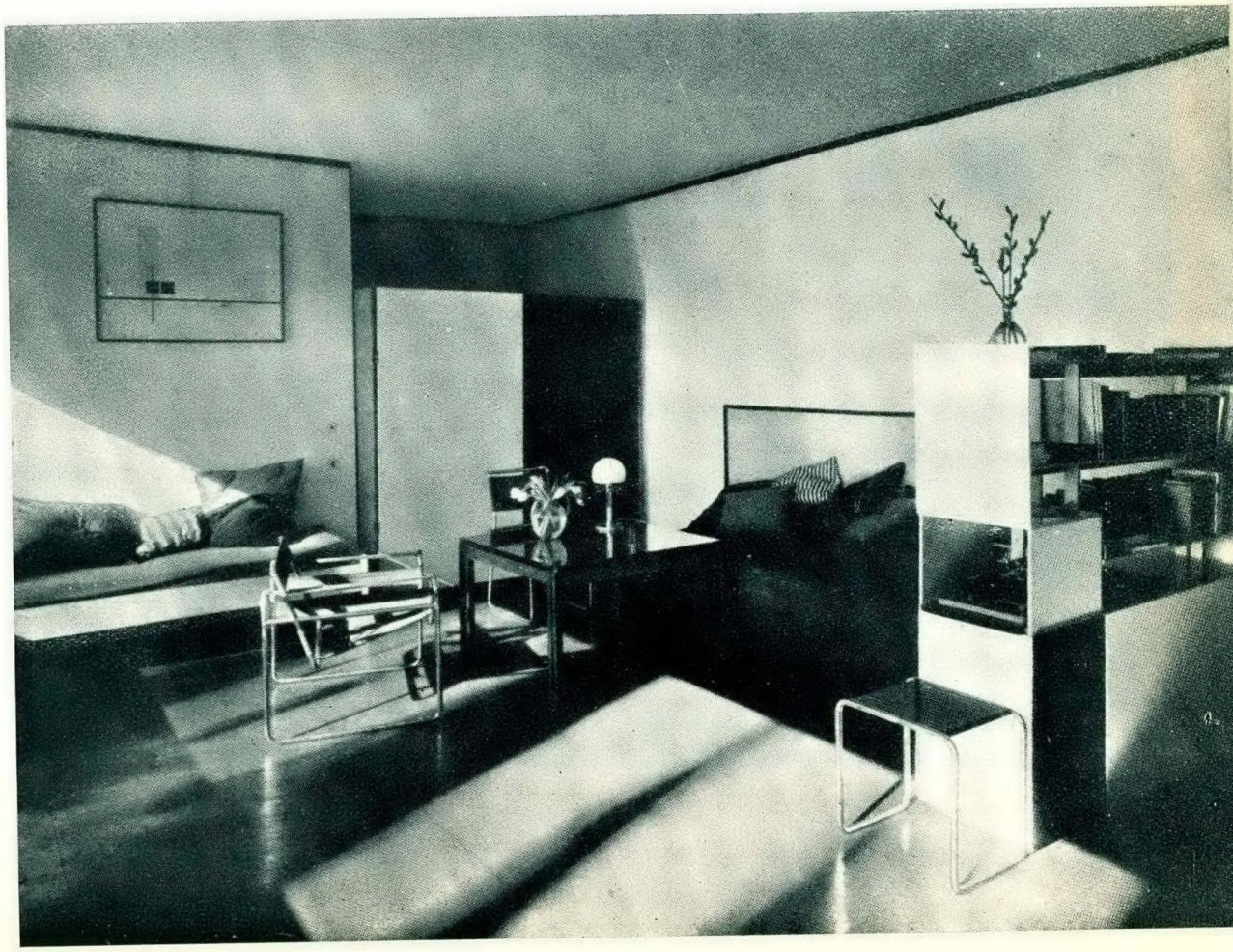
The intensive research will show which reactions can be taken as true, elementary emotions which are determined only or almost purely by the architectural qualities of those spatial arrangements which your patient has experienced and perceived during a long period of time. The extensive research will show which of these reactions can be assumed to be general. And though, perhaps, you will find few of these, you will certainly be able to assure us of a good many that they are not general (a knowledge which also may prove useful). And, furthermore, you will certainly be able to establish quite a number of definitely negative reactions, thus showing the architect what he must avoid. The field to be covered is enormous—enough work for generations of psychologists. But the work must be started . . . . . proportions of rooms, relations of size to height, straight or curved walls, or which combinations, colours, materials. Is there anything wrong with glass or steel, or is the unfavourable reaction of the public due only to prejudices of tradition and education? Which colours should be used in a living and a bedroom and which should be avoided? Is there a maximum and a minimum of psychologically permissible window space? Is there a degree of lightness which makes a room as unhabitable as, on the other hand, overmuch darkness? What about curved staircases? Would it be good to live in circular rooms? What about the psychological effects which a church, a theatre, a dance-hall should have? Are there definite shapes which assist it and others which counteract it? . . . . .

Do we not ask too much? I am almost afraid we do. But then, you see, we do not expect an answer by to-morrow. It took a few thousand



● Walter Gropius

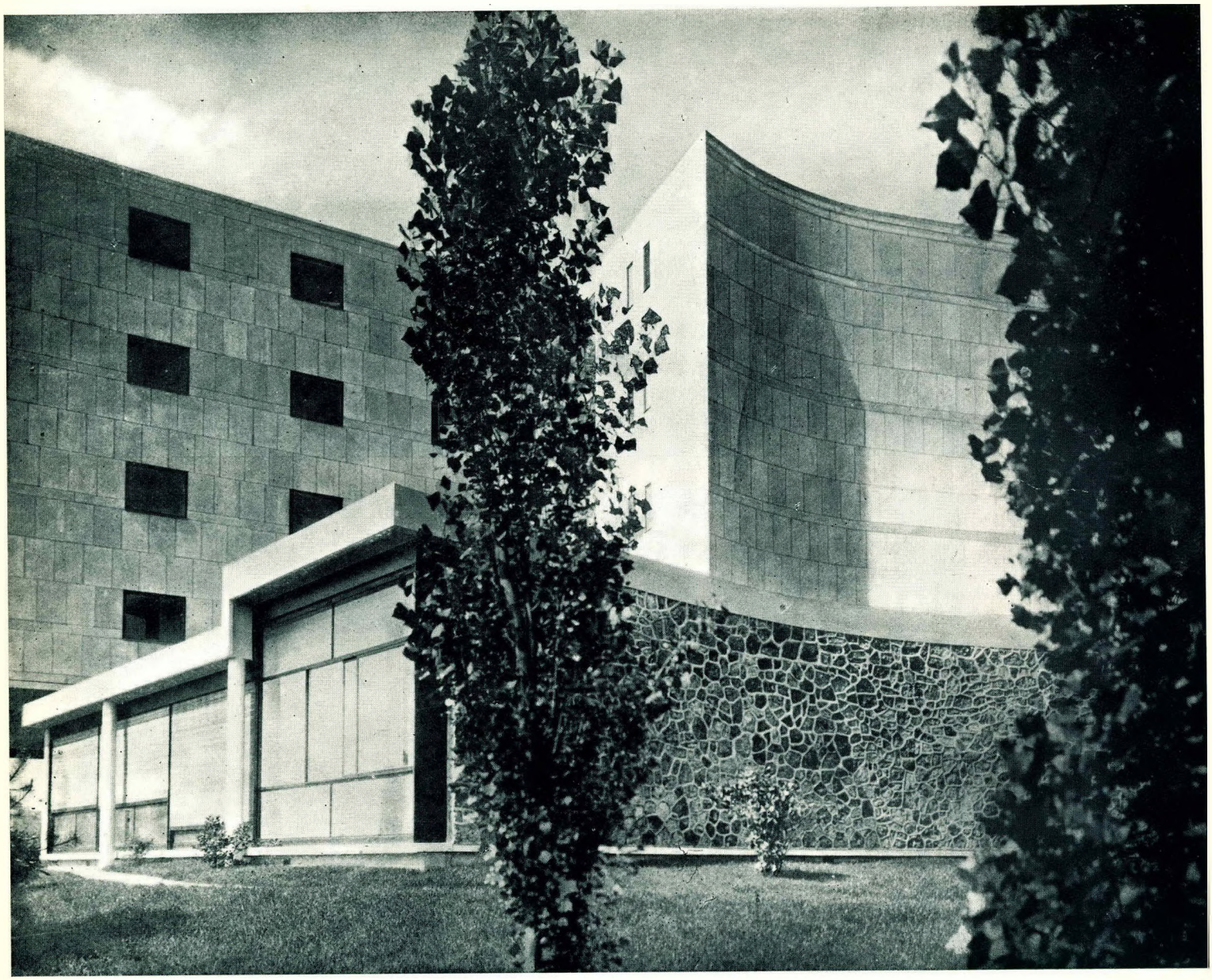
Study of Bauhaus–director, Dessau. The crystalline character of the room is in itself suggestive of int–ellectual leadership



● Gropius and Moholy-Nagy

Living room in Moholy–Nagy's House, Dessau.

An Artists Home, suggestive of movement & repose at the same time.



Swiss Pavilion, Paris

Le Corbusier

years before the constructional part of architecture reached a definitely scientific basis. It may well take a few decades before the psychological side of architecture has reached the same standard. Architecture, the art which has of all arts the greatest, because the most constant, influence on the making of the human mind is as a psychological factor still in the "utopian" state : The architect hopes for the best, and is happy if it is not just the worst that turns out. We must come from the naïve and utopian architecture to the architecture that is based on psychology as much as on engineering. Only then will its influence be for good, and it will assist you, dear psychologist, in your striving for healthy and happy minds. So when may we hope to see the first results of your psychological research ? Do not keep us waiting too long. We need your help.

Thank you,

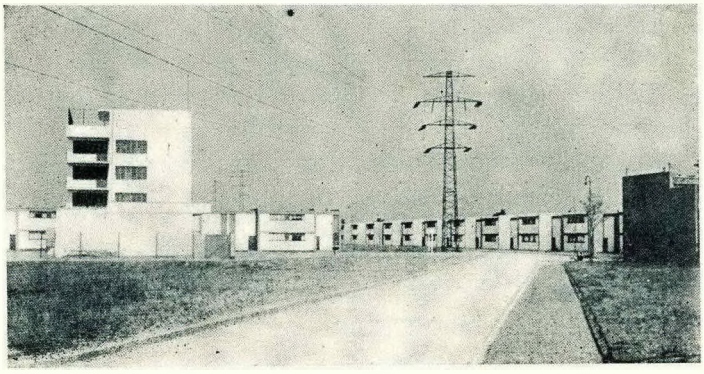
Yours, etc. . . . .

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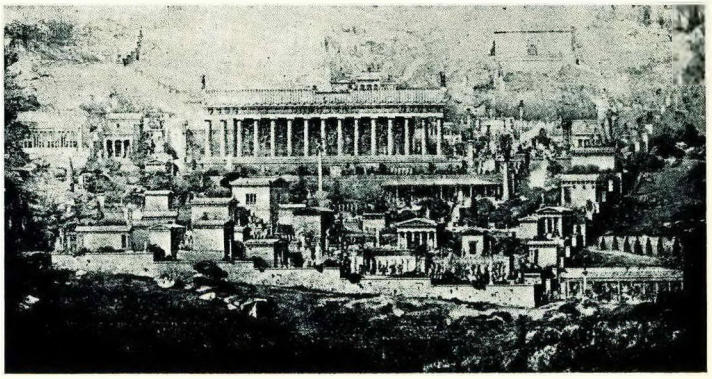
So we have written the letter. Let us hope that it will do some good. But whilst we wait for an answer there is no need to be idle. For though we do not yet know the rules which the architect must follow so that the public may like his architectural language, we may at least look for some means of making the public understand this language. But how can we expect that much ? If there was one architectural language it would be easy. But there are hundreds. A Tower of Babel.

To find one common language understandable to everyone within the sphere of our civilisation, this is the task of the architect. And by doing so he will be working in the same direction into which psychological research will ultimately lead him. A concluding essay will attempt to outline that common language of architecture which will make the public understand this art and, therefore—one day—even like it.

TWO EXAMPLES OF STANDARDIZATION



Gropius Housing at Dessau



Delphi

TOWN PLANNING

By G. E. PEARSE

A Paper read before the Workers Educational Association, Benoni Branch, Wednesday, March 4th 1936

The subject upon which I have been invited to speak to you this evening is one which should be understood and appreciated by every intelligent man and woman, for upon it largely depends the health and happiness of mankind. It is a subject which is exercising the minds of governments and municipalities in every civilised country in the world, and the necessity for the control of haphazard development and land speculation cannot be sufficiently stressed.

To understand and appreciate the principles of town planning is not very difficult, but, for that reason, care must be exercised, for too much interference by misguided amateurs may constitute a danger to the community concerned.

To many, town planning is an unnecessary extravagance and expense, a new fangled notion put forward by impractical idealists. But this is not the case, and the fact that it has been practised for centuries is evidence of its need.

As far back as five thousand years ago the builders of the Pyramids of Egypt laid out towns for their workers to a preconceived plan, care being taken to provide efficient drainage and sanitation.

The Greek cities, states and colonies vied with each other in producing towns, which, with their civic centres and well planned markets, are still an example to town planners to-day, and the names of famous town planners of that period have come down to us.

The town plan of the practical-minded Romans is still an object lesson to the student of town planning, and the imperial schemes of the Roman emperors have influenced the layout of many great cities in Europe.

The haphazard but picturesque fortress towns of the Middle Ages leave much to be desired, but the city walls, following as they did strategic points and providing for rapid movements of troops from one part to another, have in many cases been removed and replaced by great boulevards which are a source of inspiration to the modern town planner.

With the Renaissance, and more particularly in the 17th and 18th centuries, town planning in the grand manner was carried out by many of the aristocratic town rulers of those days, and much can be learnt from a study of these schemes.

The plan of London, prepared by Sir C. Wren after the great fire in the 17th century, is a fine example of capable town planning. Had it been carried out, London might have ranked as one of the finest planned cities in the world, but, unfortunately, vested commercial interests, so common to-day, prevented its fulfilment.

The monumental town planning schemes of the French kings, carried on later by Republican and Imperial France, have made cities like Paris world famous, and the thoroughness of German town planning is an object lesson to many European countries.

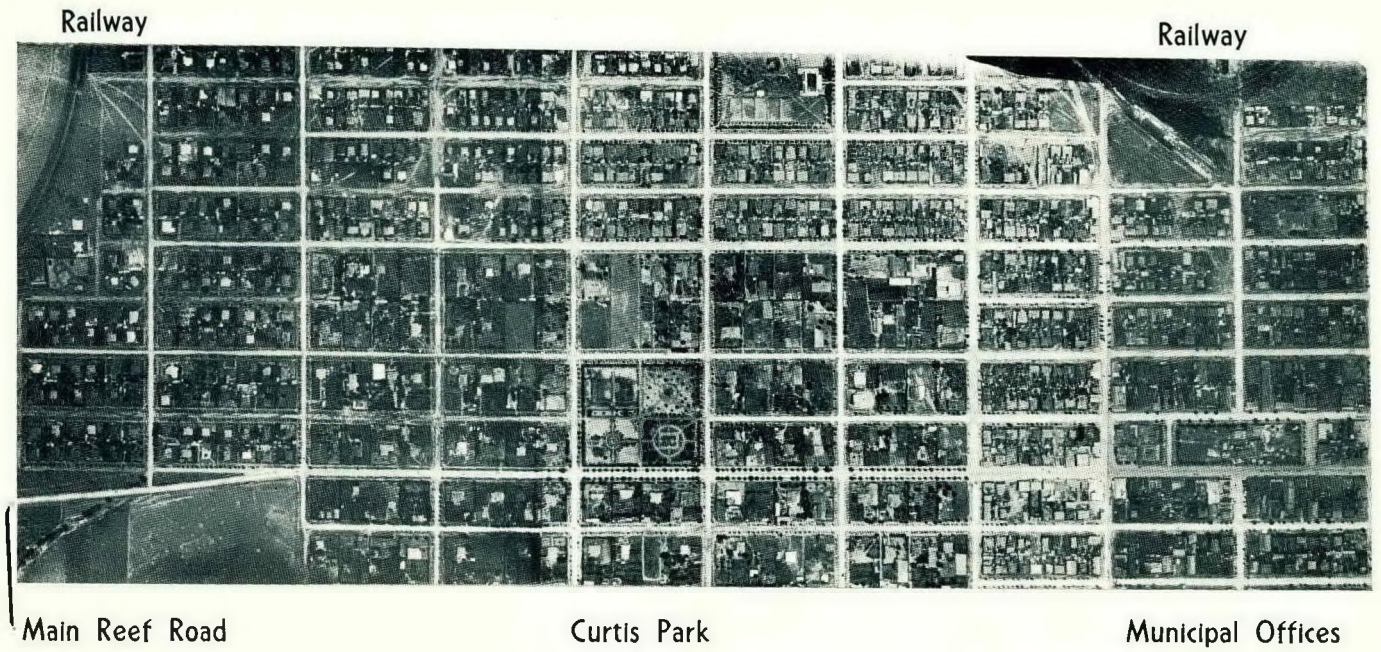
So, as you see, town planning is no new art.

Perhaps no countries have been so backward in their town planning schemes as England and her dependencies.

The great industrial movement in the 19th century brought about an influx of country dwellers to the towns, a state of affairs to be found on the Rand to-day, and speculation in land and buildings laid the foundations of the resultant slums, which are now being swept away at considerable expense.

It is to prevent a recurrence of such conditions that the British Government and the governments of the Crown Colonies are putting a stop to uncontrolled development and insisting upon regional and civic surveys being carried out.

We in the Transvaal are fortunate in this respect. Through the wisdom of our administrators and the common sense of our municipalities a great scheme is under way, first, to co-ordinate and link up that great area known



CENTRAL AREA OF BENONI FROM THE AIR

as the Witwatersrand with Pretoria and Vereeniging, and, secondly, to tackle each municipal area individually, straighten it out, and prepare schemes for future growth and development.

In this connection a tribute must be paid to the Transvaal Town Planning Association for its great and unselfish task in pegging away at our provincial and municipal authorities with ultimate success.

It now remains for the various local authorities to work out their development schemes, and it is sincerely to be hoped that a final co-ordinated scheme may result with far-reaching benefits. We are fortunate, too, in having obtained the services of such an eminent firm of town planning consultants as Messrs. Adams, Thompson and Fry. Dr. Adams has earned a world reputation as a town planner and has done a great work in his regional survey of New York.

It is to be hoped that every opportunity will be given to this firm to carry out their work in the Transvaal and that little or no interference will be forthcoming from intelligent, but often misguided, technical officials.

The town of Lusaka, the capital of Northern Rhodesia, is a tragic example of what appears to be official interference. The fine plan of Professor Adshead has been considerably altered, and it is difficult to understand the reason for such alterations, except, as I have said, through official interference.

Town planning in practice varies considerably. It may consist of laying out an entirely new town, as has happened at Delhi, in India, Canberra, in Australia, and Lusaka, in Northern Rhodesia. It may consist of planning new suburbs to an existing town, as is so constantly going on in our rapidly developing towns in South Africa.

It may consist of remodelling an existing town by the removal of slums, the re-arrangement of streets to cope with our modern traffic problems, the provision of further open spaces, and, generally, the creation of order out of chaos. To do this on a large scale involves considerable expenditure of money, and to prevent this in the future is to apply modern town planning methods to present day expansion.

It may consist of the layout of open spaces such as public squares and park areas and, finally and most important, the re-arrangement of railways and main roads.

But whatever form town planning takes it is most essential that co-operation and an intelligent outlook should exist, if we are going to save vast expenditure later on, and if we are going to hand on to posterity a properly co-ordinated scheme.

It has been truly said that environment affects all forms of life, and it cannot be doubted that unhealthy conditions, inharmonious surroundings and ugly colours, amongst which so many of our urban population spend their lives, lead to squalor and disease, of which crime is the inevitable outcome.

The preparation of a town planning scheme is not unlike the planning of one's own home. In the first place, it is essential to study the site, to appreciate the levels and the difficulties of building or drainage dependent thereon. Low-lying and swampy ground must be avoided, as it is usually an indication of ill-health and disease. Areas must be allocated for different purposes —business, industrial, residential and open spaces, whether for parks or recreation. All these must be selected with the utmost care and so arranged that the amenities of the one shall not be destroyed by the other.

These areas correspond with the placing of the various rooms in the home, the approaches to it and the garden surrounding it.

Industrial areas, for example, must be so situated that noxious fumes or dust will not permeate the more healthy residential districts.

Business areas must be conveniently accessible from main roads and railway stations. Residential areas must have the healthiest situations, but the question of transport for the different classes of citizen must be borne in mind.

Low-lying ground, if well drained, can best be utilised for park and recreation purposes, but, if possible, each area or zone should be separated by intervening belts of trees, with smaller well distributed park areas.

Having arranged the various zones, to the best advantage, we next come to the linking up of these areas by main roads and subsidiary streets, and here again every effort must be made to provide economic widths and consider drainage, both surface and underground.

So many of our South African towns have been laid out on a gridiron or chequerboard plan, with its uniform blocks for buildings and its uniform width for streets, with the result that, when taken over by a municipal authority, enormous expenditure is involved in the paving and maintenance of these streets, many of which are far too wide, some not wide enough and some far too close together.

The gridiron plan, whilst quite suitable for a level site, if not overdone, is hopeless on undulating sites where steep gradients are common.

In such a case the streets should follow the contours of the ground in one direction, and cross streets should be arranged only where an easy gradient is possible.

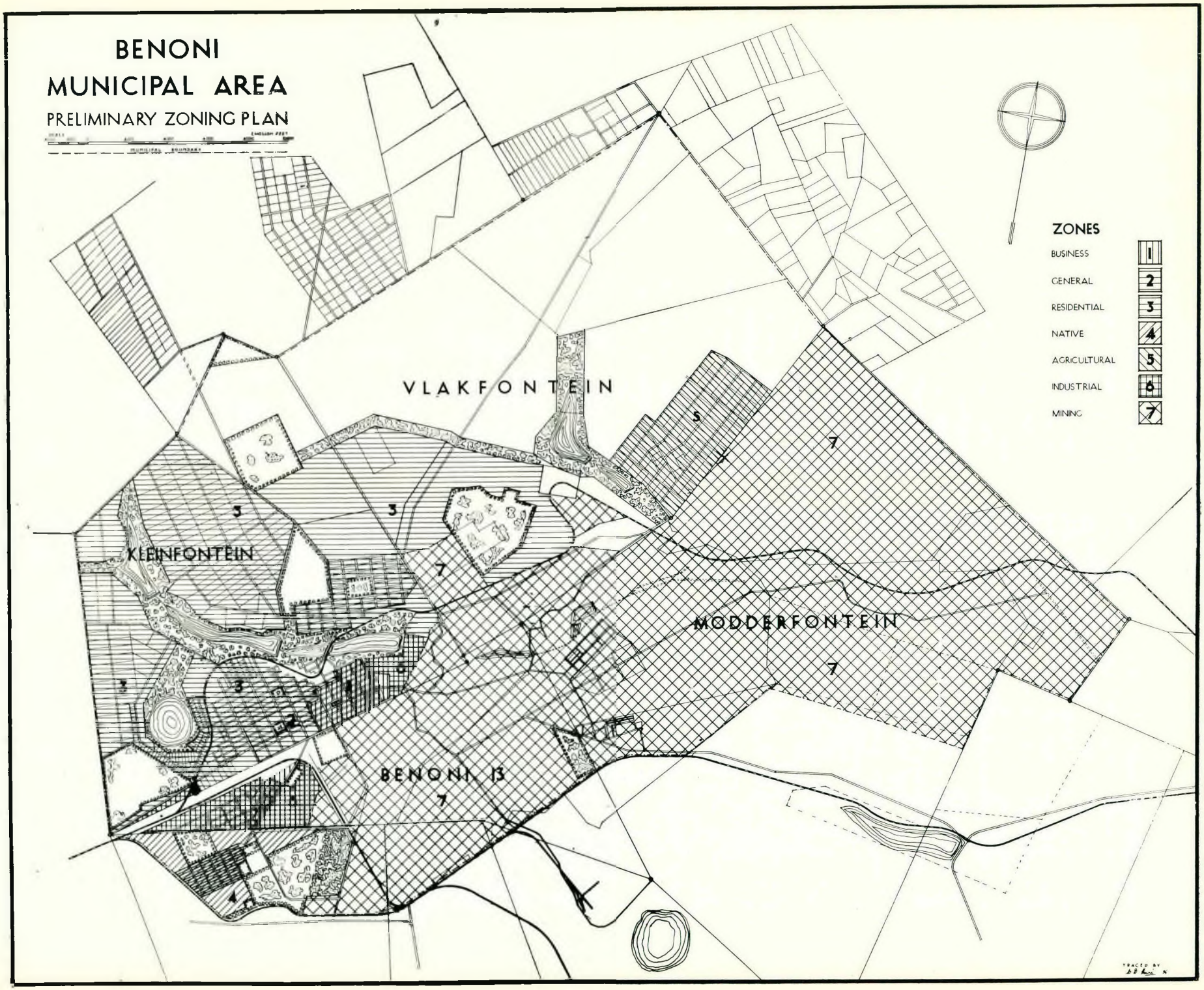
The siting of railways is all important, and it is quite possible to foresee to-day in which direction town development is likely to take place and make provision accordingly.

The majority of South African towns are most unfortunate in the siting of railways. Durban and Capetown, two seaports with beautiful settings, are almost irretrievably ruined by lack of forethought in this respect.

In Johannesburg is another example of an unfortunately situated railway. Not only does it form a barrier between the town and the rapidly growing northern suburbs, but its main goods depot is situated on the opposite side of the town to the industrial and factory areas which it serves. Consequently, business and shopping streets are frequently blocked by heavy railway wagons and trailers. Had the advice of the Town Planning Association given some years ago been followed, many of Johannesburg's traffic problems would have been solved. Their proposal was to carry the railway straight through from George Goch station to Fordsburg and place the railway station and goods yards south of the town.

Actually the main railway station would have been nearer the Town Hall than it is at present, and the levels of the ground would have permitted nearly every street running north and south to cross the railway by bridges or straightforward subways instead of the present death traps. But a municipal council with no

BENONI
MUNICIPAL AREA
PRELIMINARY ZONING PLAN



vision, backed by vested commercial interests, has for all time ruined a valuable economic solution of the problem. The lowering of the present railway line will be of considerable advantage, but the cost of the Town Planning Association's scheme would have been infinitesimal by comparison.

It is most encouraging to find that Benoni, in almost similar circumstances, proposes tackling the problem in the right way. This will not only provide the town with a fine boulevard, but will considerably enhance the value of property on either side and add to the general attractiveness of the town.

Having zoned our town, provided the various essential areas, and set out our street pattern, the next thing to do is to provide sites for various government, municipal, educational and religious purposes.

Here again wisdom and judgment are necessary. The early town planners in South Africa provided us with fine, wide streets, such as we find in the older Dutch towns, and with ample squares. The ox-wagon and its outspan were determining factors, but the provision of sites for public buildings was frequently overlooked, with the result that large sums of money have had to be expended to purchase necessary sites, or, failing that, the open spaces or squares had to be used for the purpose.

In Johanesburg and our Reef towns, laid out at a later date, we have suffered in the same way. Almost every square in Johannesburg, is built over, and we are now squabbling over an expenditure of £300,000 to obtain a garden in front of our Town Hall.

Had the advice of the Town Planning Association been followed, again given some years ago, this space could have been purchased at about one-sixth of this figure.

It seems quite wrong in principle to allow open spaces or parks to be built upon, and every effort should be made to prevent such vandalism in the future.

To come back to my point, ample sites should be allocated for various buildings, such as town halls, market houses, courts, post offices, schools and religious buildings, and these sites should be most carefully considered.

The town hall should have a central position with a dignified setting. It expresses the town's civic life and means much to the general layout. A market house should be so situated that at least a portion of the area surrounding it could be planted with shady trees and provided with shelters. A court-house should be so placed that those unfortunates who have perforce to enter its doors should not have to be paraded through the main streets of the town for the purpose.

The post office is another important public building, and so, for that matter, are the banks, which should be centrally situated to the best advantage.

The railway station is one of the gateways to the town. From it is obtained one's first impression, and that impression should be a good one from a publicity point of view. Our railway stations in this country leave much to be desired. They have long been looked upon as mere engineering structures, and, as such, bear the imprint of the engineer, which, in his own sphere, is most inspiring, but not when applied to what is essentially an architectural structure.

The siting of schools means a great deal to the outlook of the children attending them. Away from main roads and near park surroundings is the ideal situation, and here one might say something of the school buildings themselves.

Much can be said in favour of free education, but why it should be accompanied by costly and expressionless, drab and dreary buildings is certainly difficult to understand. What one wants in education is cheerful surroundings, both externally and internally.

The spiritual side of our civic life is best expressed in our religious buildings, and they should be well situated, for, as important public buildings, they lend much to the charm and dignity of the town, or should do. Unfortunately, in this country, one is sorry to say, these buildings rarely reflect credit on the town, nor do they express that dignity which one expects of them and their purpose.

Finally we come to the sub-division of the building blocks for various purposes, whether business or residential. One can say little of this sub-division, except that it should serve its purpose in the most satisfactory way.

But if we are ever going to have towns which reflect credit on our present-day civilisation and, more particularly, offer attractions to visitors, much more control is required in the design of our buildings, whatever purpose they may serve.

With regard to the shops and business premises which line the important streets of our towns, some sort of control should be exercised. The streets, after all, belong to the municipal authority, which in turn represents the citizens themselves. It seems absurd to think that, provided the building bye-laws are complied with, and they, after all, are only meant to prevent the erection of dangerous and unhealthy structures, anyone can come along and put up an excrescence or hideous structure along the public way. Of course, it may be asked at once—who are to be the dictators of fashion or the arbiters of taste ?

In reply I would say that if other countries can do it, why shouldn't we ?

Anyone who has travelled extensively carries in his mind the beautiful street scenes of many continental towns and cities where control has been exercised or good taste has been observed.

Even in commercially-minded America we find towns which, by a very simple and easy working arrangement, are producing results which make them an attraction to visitors, who flock there in large numbers. Their system is to have a constantly changing committee of civic-minded individuals, including qualified architects, who criticise every building project put forward. The criticisms are published in the local Press and create great public interest. Time and time again an unfortunate mistake is prevented by this method, and the town, as a whole, benefits.

With regard to control of residential buildings, this is not an easy matter, as it is so often stated that a man's home is his castle. But by adopting the procedure I have outlined it does not take very long to educate the public into what is good and what is objectionable.

Some of the towns on the Rand are particularly unfortunate in the class of residential building which is being put up, very often under the aegis of building societies and reputable estate agents. If these money-lenders could only be persuaded to co-operate with architects and reputable builders, a much higher standard at very little extra cost could be attained.

In conclusion I should like to refer once again to the regional and civic surveys which are now nearing completion. Through the courtesy of Colonel Bowling, of the Regional Town Planner's office, I am able to show you something of what is being done.

The Regional Plan deals with the Witwatersrand area as a whole, and shows what exists and what should be aimed at in the future, by the establishment of new link roads, park areas, preservation of beauty spots, provision for sewage disposal, etc.

The civic surveys, which I have brought with me, are those of Johannesburg and Benoni, towns which are probably best known to most of you. Of Johannesburg I do not wish to say very much, except to emphasise one or two main points which I have referred to earlier.

Benoni is to be congratulated on the excellent opportunities it has of being made one of the most attractive garden cities in the whole of the Witwatersrand area, and, indeed, in the Union. The removal of the railway north of the town makes the zoning almost ideal.

South of the southern railway is to be seen the rapidly growing industrial area. It is rather unfortunate that the approach from Johannesburg should be marred by one or two industries which are situated north of the railway line, for as an approach to a town, with its fine tree and flower-lined road, it is difficult to beat.

The removal of the existing northern railway will provide a fine ring road or boulevard enclosing the more congested area and forming a break between that and the encircling suburbs. To the north of the latter are a number of sheets of water which, if linked up in a great park area, will make the town one of the most attractive resorts in the Transvaal.

From this park belt a road can be developed which will link up with Johannesburg's northern suburbs, shortening the distance to that city and providing a beautiful park drive between the two centres.

If only, as I have said, a few civic-minded individuals could get together and form a strong and influential committee which would, by its criticism, educate the citizens of this delightful area to a greater appreciation of what good building means, Benoni may yet rival such attractive centres as Paarl, Stellenbosch and the early colonial towns at the Cape, which are now, unfortunately, gradually being ruined by uncontrolled speculative land development.

CORRESPONDENCE

To The Editor,
S.A. Architectural Record

Dear Sir,

I have read with great interest the minutes of the Special General Meeting of the Transvaal Provincial Institute, held on the 18th February last, and much regret my inability to be present.

There still remains a good deal to be exposed on the subject, and I suggest that the Special Committee, appointed at the meeting, should invite further information and suggestions from members. Something in the nature of a Commission of Enquiry is called for.

A lot has been said at various meetings about educating the public. Actually the " boot is on the other leg." The public is educating the profession—in commercialism.

The public is not looking for education, it is looking for cheap work—and getting it. If the architect is not prepared to cut his fee to next to nothing, it is a case of hawking it around until the rock bottom figure is obtained.

I have heard it frequently stated that architects load their specifications to increase the cost of work, and thereby their fees. Speculative builders spread this statement, and no doubt originated it.

To remedy the present deplorable position, that of fee cutting, one must seek the causes, and I have no hesitation in placing the chief blame on estate agents, building societies, builders and non-registered practitioners. I was recently told by an agent and representative of a building society that architects' charges were too high. A working man earning from £35 to £40 per month could not afford £25 to £30 architect's fees for designing a house.

When I asked what his charges were for selling property, he replied " five per cent.," and justified this by saying that it entailed a lot of travelling and consumption of petrol.

It is well known that some building societies insist on charging inspection fees, even where architect's supervision is intended, the result being that the owner dispenses with this portion of the architect's work.

The question of architects on the Board of Directors of Building Societies is, of course, well known and understood.

With regard to builders, I could state instances where members of the M.B.A. have informed clients that, if the work was carried out by them, the architect's supervision would not be required and a portion of his fees thus saved.

Certain stipulations, laid down by the Master Builders' Association, have been accepted by the Institute of South African Architects, as follows:—

(1) No tenders to be invited for buildings over £2,000 without Bills of Quantities.

(2) Members of the M.B.A. not to be asked to tender in competition with non-members.

(2) All sub-contractors and merchants to be members of the M.B.A.

Shouldn't some " quid pro quo " be expected from the M.B.A. for these concessions, which are not always in the interest of the client ?

I suggest that members of the M.B.A. should agree to refrain from tendering for buildings unless designed by registered architects. There are many instances of large firms, members of the M.B.A., having plans prepared by unregistered men.

It is known that non-registered men not only prepare plans, but specify, supervise and issue certificates on building contracts. But as they do not call themselves architects they are exempt from the penalties of the Act.

It is very sad to hear Mr. Howden advocating a policy of letting " sleeping dogs lie " for fear of losing what little we have gained under the Act.

Personally, I fail to see what architects have gained by the Act as it stands, and I certainly agree with Mr. Allen Wilson that the practice, as well as the name of architect, should be protected.

If it is not possible to legalise the scale of fees, it surely is not impossible to legalise the practice.

Most members of the old Association of Transvaal Architects were under the impression that one of the strongest planks in advocation of the new Act was one of protection of the public from charlatanry. As the Act now stands neither the public nor the architect benefits. The architect has merely been stuck on a pedestal—of jelly.

Persistent endeavour should be made to have the Act amended and a Clause 3c introduced as follows: "or carrying out the work of an architect or quantity surveyor."

It should be noted that the work of an architect and quantity surveyor is laid down under Clause 2 of the Act. This merely restricts, but does not protect the architect. This clause could be improved by the including of, after "designing," "specifying, certifying work carried out."

Mr. Howden's promise of utopian conditions in the next generation is most gratifying and comforting to the present generation of architects, who, no doubt, will receive quite a thrill in watching the grass grow. But what is going to happen when the present building boom abates I fear to contemplate.

Some immediate action must be made to improve conditions. The old "Wait and see" policy has deplorably failed.

Dum Vivimus Viramus.

THE FUTURE OF ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE

By a Practising Architect (From the Builder, London)

1. Retrospect.

In comparing current conditions with those that have passed, it is not always a simple matter to place the existing fact and the historical memory on their comparative planes. Things which have worked themselves out without disaster, but by the blessing of good fortune, may appear to be part of a well-found plan when viewed in the light of past events, whereas the slightest inclination to trust to our destiny in the future seems now an unwarrantable shirking of responsibility. Progress is, in fact, a nice adjustment between faith in the plan of Nature, and an energetic share in the plan of man.

Experience is not an infallible guide, and imagination not always a reliable inspiration. One enters upon the task of a constructive excursion into the history and future of architectural practice with considerable diffidence, knowing full well that "mice and men" have failed despite diligence, and that the past has continually shown endless permutations and combinations of result, as well as the merit of repeating itself.

The architect, as such, owes his appearance to the self-consciousness of builders. So soon as the element of choice entered upon the process of building, the necessity for the directing mind, both as a planner and administrator, appeared. The greater the element of free choice, and the more advanced and complicated the ways of building, the more insistent became the demand for the architect: which suggests that the Future of Architectural Practice is a subject of ever-increasing importance.

We shall, however, adjust our minds more readily to the task which has been chosen if we examine those not distant times, almost within memory, when practice appeared to differ in no essential element from that of to-day, and when the element of stability appeared to be more firmly established than now.

The late-Victorian architect was normally regarded as in comfortable circumstances, whether his sphere was in London or in provincial obscurity. He was essentially a professional man, holding to a status which compared reasonably with that of the doctor or the lawyer. There was a steady flow of work coming to him, which he carried through placidly and generally efficiently: and whatever may be our criticisms of the work of this generation of architects, we cannot say that their jobs have shown a liability either to fall down or let in the weather. According to their lights, they undoubtedly gave value for the living they earned, and were acknowledged as the building experts of their day. The man of reasonable substance never dreamed of entering upon the adventure of house building by any other first step than that of the appointment of an architect. Nor, to be quite frank, did the architect expect to be consulted upon those "meaner exploits"—as they were then regarded—of cottage building or shop-front designs.

The essential points to remember, therefore, are that the architect of those days entered upon a profession of fairly distinct limitations, but with a fair knowledge that there was a living to be made if he did his job industriously and well; and that there was no question in the public mind that his calling was anything but an essential part of the social scheme. This comfortable certainty was the more remarkable in times when " artistic professions " among the lay public were seldom made, and criticism was limited to a very cultured few.

The education of the architect of those times was simple. He studied under the conditions under which he himself would practise. The things he was taught were those which would generally apply to his future experiences; and if any artistic direction entered upon his term of training it took the form of personal feeling imparted from the master to the pupil, rather than a share in a general movement. We can still trace the remnants of that personal influence in the second and third generation of pupils who have learned in this way.

When we say, then, that architectural practice in those days appeared to differ in no essential element from that of to-day, we must make the reservation that such a statement has only a superficial significance; and that we should be deeply concerned with the more fundamental differences which mark modern practice as compared with former conditions.

It is true that there is no difference in the professional claims, the aims, or the purposes of the two generations; but we may find it equally true that failure to recognise any change of conditions has done more to cripple the advance of architecture than any outside influence has brought about.

We have to ask ourselves : Are architects trained in the best possible way to meet the conditions with which they will be faced. Does the architect of to-day enter upon private practice with the same confidence of an assured future such as the solicitor and the doctor can generally count upon ? Does the professional status of the architect stand high in the public mind ? Is the modern architect as much a master of his job as was the late Victorian practitioner ? Has the architect of to-day the same command of respect from the contractors as had he of those other days ? And, finally, whose fault is it, if the answers to these questions reflect to the detriment of to-day's conditions ? Is the fault from within or without the profession ?

It is the purpose of these articles to endeavour to discover where things have drifted off the track, and to conclude, if possible, whether we are to resign ourselves to the indifference of a defective generation, or to adjust ourselves afresh to new conditions which have had no prototype in history. The second of these alternatives is the only conclusion we can accept which gains opportunity for active remedy, since resignation may be another name for suicide.

We thus enter upon our analysis of modern private architectural practice, making it clear that it is the private practitioner who is under review. Those who seek escape from the problem by a pen-visioned Socialist State in which each diligent member is assured of a State salary may satisfy themselves with this dream of the future, of which some modern tendencies may appear as the shadow cast before it. For ourselves, we are going to assume that the best architecture is the free architecture of private practice—free in the spiritual sense, and taking care that it does not become free in a commercial sense.

II. The Present Position.

The term " status," as applied to a profession or individual, defies a brief definition, being one of those words full of meaning which enrich a language. In this discussion it is of importance, because it seems to be the " status " of the architect which has suffered in recent years, to his detriment.

It would not be unfair to say that any successful man must have the same opinion of his own importance as the public should feel he possesses. In such a statement, a divergence in either direction denies full success. In other words, the man who exaggerates his importance is as liable to fail as he who suffers from an " inferiority complex." The whole matter is wrapped up in the element of realism and the facing of facts. It is of the greatest importance that the architect should " face up " to this question of his status. He is very conscious of it in most cases, and if he were asked to define it as briefly as possible, his thesis would probably bear the closest resemblance to one which would have been prepared by one of the late

Victorians in answer to a similar question. It would also resemble the answer of an intelligent layman of the 'eighties and 'nineties. It would not agree with the answer of the average layman of to-day.

It is within the scope of this discrepancy that we have to seek out the defect in the system. Put in very plain and, perhaps, impolite terms : Do we think a lot more of ourselves than the public thinks of us ? It may comfort us to say that the public is wrong and we are right, but it will certainly not keep us. We have to remember that we must not expect the social system to adjust itself to us if we are not prepared to adjust ourselves to the social system. It is the lack of this factor which creates the discrepancy in the conceptions of the importance of the architectural profession from within and without its ranks.

It may be useful to go back a few years into fairly recent history. During the War, when there was really no such thing as public opinion as a check upon public policy, the Ministry of Munitions was faced with the problem of creating new townships to accommodate many of the workers of the new industry. There were available, under discipline, men of all conditions and civil training, including architects, and to the latter was allotted the task of devising simple housing units. To the surprise of many, the architects did not produce Christmas card cottages, but a series of eminently practical types, fundamentally economical in form and construction. It was the first time that the profession had been called upon to handle the problem of small housing on a big scale, and it was an outstanding example of the successful application of the planning mind to everyday things.

When peace was declared, and the national mind turned to domestic problems which at once clamoured for attention, this great work of the architects was but half done, and it became apparent that there were enormous arrears of house-building to be done after four years of civil inaction, if the social fabric was to be held together.

The figures of urgent needs made almost impossible demands upon the energies of the country, when measured in terms of pre-War activity. There appeared to be a lifetime's work of house-building before us, and for the first time for many years the architect seemed to be in charge of the job. It is easy to say that the profession lost its head in face of such a glowing prospect, now that events have run their course. It is certain, however, that the profession lost its new grip upon the future from that propitious moment.

Many young returned officers who had enlisted before starting or completing any training for a living were encouraged to look upon the architectural profession as capable of any degree of absorption. Large housing schemes, comprising a high measure of repeat work, were entrusted to architects, and building commenced with a swing at a time of unconscionably inflated value, and in the midst of continual labour claims. The thousand-pound cottage was the rule rather than the exception, built in districts where, a street away, many landlords could still collect only their five shillings a week and pay the rates.

It was at much about this time that the Royal Institute of British Architects determined to raise the basic scale of fees from 5 per cent. to 6 per cent. It was at this time also that architects claimed their literally just dues upon the housing schemes built at costs which could not last, and which quickly brought activity to a standstill. The conclusion at which many people arrived was that architecture applied to the cottage was an expensive luxury, and the case seemed proved when economic developments brought down the price of cottages to a fraction of their peak value while the Council Surveyors were administering these jobs.

Rightly or wrongly, I put down our present evils to this unfortunate sequence. We are left with too many architects, and denied the work for which they built up their hopes for a living. The work was there. The men were there, and the schools for their training were expanded. We are left with the schools depending for their existence upon attracting the men, and turning them out into a labour market in which the inactive jostle one another. A surplus of goods or men lowers values. We cannot preserve a high detachment when skill is spilled out before us with such profusion.

That is a brief history of a glowing prospect, despoiled by a lack of foresight, of which we are none of us quite guiltless. We have now to be as wise to future events as we have been wise after past events.



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