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SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

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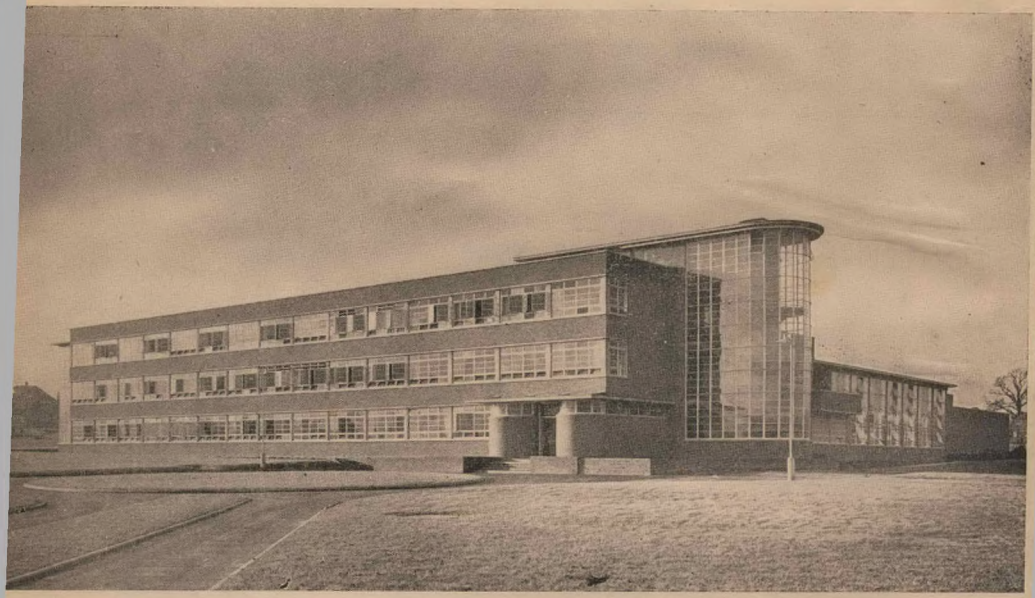
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AN ENGLISH SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR BOYS, AT CHISLEHURST, KENT

By Sidney H. Loweth, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A
Architect to the Kent County Council

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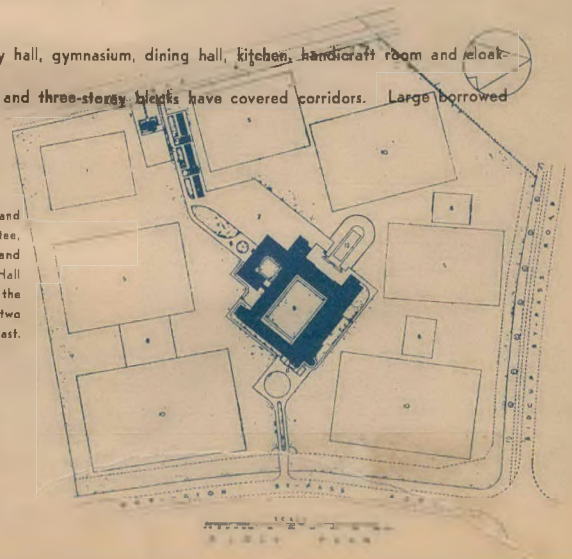
The new school provides accommodation for 600 boys and establishes a four-form entry school for the district of Chislehurst and Sidcup and the surrounding area.

The corner site is bounded by the Sidcup by-pass and the Orpington by-pass. For this reason the school buildings have been set well back from the road, enabling the best orientation of the classrooms. Hitherto the site had been used as playing fields for the school. The scheme originally submitted provided for an open layout of the buildings with accommodation arranged on two floors only. This plan, however, was rejected on the grounds that it wasted the site. The present scheme gives a three-storey block of classrooms with south-east aspect and a two-storey block of science rooms facing north-east. A steady fall across the site involved different levels of the ground floor in various blocks.

Although the plan is quadrangular, the buildings at the sides of the court are kept to one storey.

The changing rooms, which are in duplicate, have been planned so that they may be used either from the playing fields or from the gymnasium.

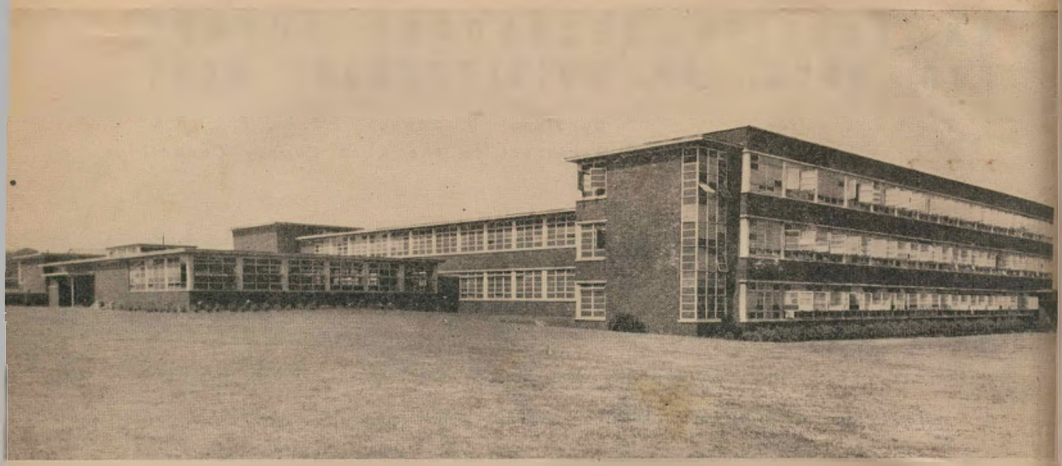
Single-storey blocks which comprise assembly hall, gymnasium, dining hall, kitchen, handicraft room and cloak-rooms are planned with open corridors; two and three-storey blocks have covered corridors. Large borrowed



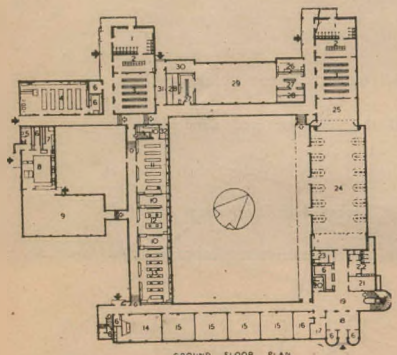
Opposite: General view of the Chislehurst and Sidcup County School, Kent Educational Committee, showing main entrance and classroom wing, and on right, the principal stair with the Assembly Hall beyond. *At Right*: The Block Plan illustrating the setting back of the school building from the two by-pass roads which bound the site on north and east.

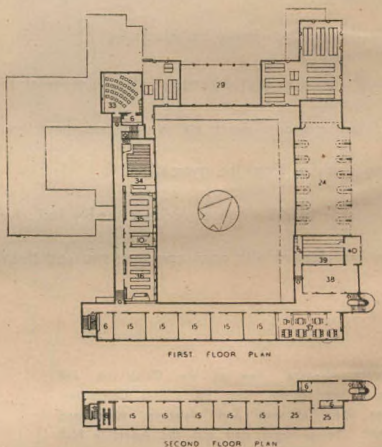
KEY TO BLOCK PLAN.

1. Minor Games.
2. Caretaker's House.
3. Bicycle Shed.
4. Fives Court.
5. Other Games.
6. Kitchen Entrance.
7. Tar-paved Area.
8. Cricket Table.
9. The School.
10. Rugby Pitch.
11. Main Entrance.
12. Swimming Pool.



General view of the School from the south, with Dining Hall and Kitchen on the left, Science wing in centre, and the Classroom wing on the right.





1. Boys' Offices.
2. Boys' Lavatory.
3. Cloakroom.
4. Handicraft Room.
5. Kitchen Staff Lavatory.
6. Store.
7. Larder.
8. Kitchen.
9. Dining Hall.
10. Preparation Room.
11. Biology Laboratory.
12. Advanced Chemistry Laboratory.
13. Elementary Chemistry Laboratory.
14. Geography Room.
15. Classroom.
16. Headmaster's Room.
17. Secretary's Room.
18. Vestibule.
19. Entrance Hall.
20. Headmaster's Lavatory.
21. Waiting and Medical Inspection Room.
22. Staff Cloaks.
23. Secretary's and Female Visitors' Lavatory.
24. Assembly Hall.
25. Stage and Division Room.
26. Towel Laundry.
27. Changing Room.
28. Showers.
29. Gymnasium.
30. Gymnasium Store.
31. Games Store.
32. Gym. Instructor's Room.
33. Art Room.
34. Lecture Room.
35. Advanced Physics Laboratory.
36. Physics Laboratory.
37. Library.
38. Staff Room.
39. Gallery.
40. Balcony.

lights between the classrooms and the corridors assist in providing even lighting over the whole teaching area in accordance with the requirements of the Kent Education Committee.

The buildings are reinforced concrete framed throughout with solid slab floors and roofs. The ferro-concrete structure is so designed that practically the whole of the interior can be gutted and readily rearranged and replaced. The hall roof construction is interesting; horizontal components of the portal frames have been carried above the roof slab in order to preserve an unbroken ceiling surface, and the lower portions of the frames have been employed as decorative elements in the internal treatment of the hall. The electric lights, in copper boxes, are also external. They are thus readily accessible for bulb replacements and cleaning.

The external walls are 11in. hollow panel walls with the outer 4½in. skin built in facing bricks and arranged to pass in front of the reinforced concrete columns and other structural members, and supported on toe lintols of ground and floor beams.

In order to provide the maximum of natural lighting, the metal windows are fixed direct to the reinforced concrete columns and the lug holes in the columns are covered by rendering the external face of the columns green.

The roofs are covered with 1in. cork slabs to prevent loss of heat, while the bituminous roofing is covered with asbestos cement tiles as insulation against solar radiation. Five incendiary bombs burnt out on this roof and caused no serious damage. A land mine exploded 500 yards away from the building and only blew out a few windows.

The glass tower surrounding the main staircase was adopted in order to give light to a short length of enclosed entrance hall and corridors over, which occur at the main entrance. At the same time the staircase was planned to form a central vertical duct which masks the main boiler flue. This large window is cleaned from a travelling cradle which runs on a steel rail fixed to the overhang of the reinforced concrete flat roof. The cradle is housed in a shed on the flat roof, to one side.

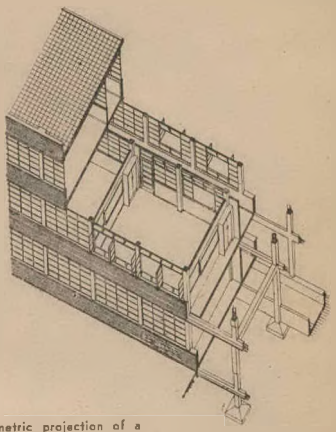
The semi-circular landings cantilever from a semi-circular concrete core, while the flights of stairs are cast in with the 6in. concrete walling of the duct, but are reinforced to span from floor to landing.

The window framing, although self-supporting, is tied into the landings and stairs by bolts fixed to the mullions.

All rainwater pipes have been cast into the reinforced concrete framework, and other wastes and services are either concealed in ducts or brought down within the building in stores, etc.

The reinforced concrete slab to the covered ways is supported by reinforced concrete columns formed by using 4in. polished, uncoated asbestos cement soil pipes as permanent shuttering.

Brick has been adopted as the facing material most suitable from the point of view of first cost and maintenance. These considerations also decided the adoption of horizontal panes to the windows in lieu of panes the full size of the sashes. In

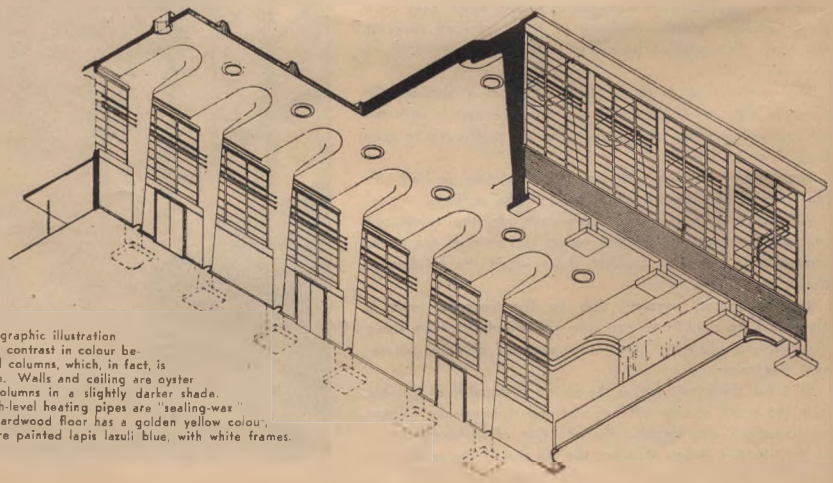


ABOVE: The axonometric projection of a portion of the classroom wing shows the general method of construction. The external walls are 11in. cavity panels, with the outer skin of facing bricks arranged to pass in front of the structural members, and supported on the toe of the ground and floor beams. Large borrowed lights are provided between classroom and corridors, according to the requirements of the Kent Education Committee. A service duct runs below the ground floor corridor.

BELOW: View of the first floor corridor in the Science wing.



The Assembly Hall, shown in the section on page 4, is equivalent in height to two floors, and is itself a single storey portal frame unit, the construction of which is illustrated in the cutaway isometric below. The horizontal roof beams are carried above the roof slab in order to obtain an uninterrupted ceiling surface, which consists of skim plaster on ½in. fibreboard used as permanent centering to the concrete roof slab. In addition to radiator heating, high-level heating, comprising three 2in. pipes with welded joints, has been installed. These pipes, as shown in the illustration pass through sleeves in the concrete columns.



The above photographic illustration suggests a strong contrast in colour between ceiling and columns, which, in fact, is barely discernible. Walls and ceiling are oyster grey, with the columns in a slightly darker shade. Curtains and high-level heating pipes are "sealing-wax" red. The oiled hardwood floor has a golden yellow colour, and the doors are painted lapis lazuli blue, with white frames.

order to facilitate glass replacements, inside puttying has been adapted to all windows. The major portion of the windows to classrooms and corridors have been arranged as outward opening casements in pairs without a central mullion in order that good ventilation can be obtained at a comparatively low cost. These windows are also fitted with horizontal centre-hung and hopper lights for use in wet weather. Laboratories are provided with horizontal centre-hung windows on account of the wall benches.

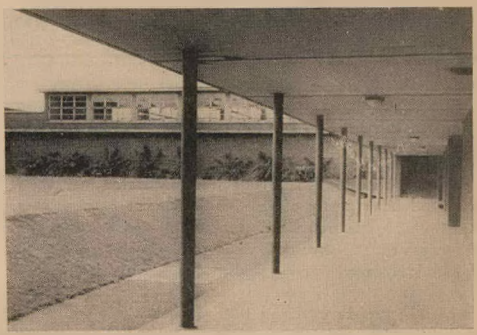
Where concrete is exposed externally, i.e., to lintols, cills, copings, overhang of roof slab, open corridors, etc., a smooth finish has been obtained by using a hard board shutter lining.

Whilst the photographs indicate a contrast in colour in the hall, this is not actually the case. The inverted legs of the portal frames are a slightly darker shade and are hardly discernible. The colour scheme comprises oyster grey walls and ceiling, with "sealing wax red" stage curtains and hot water pipes in front of the big windows. Amber electric lights shine from the roof with a red pipe round the edges. The floor is golden yellow (oiled hard wood), and the cills are black tiles. Doors are lapis lazuli blue in white frames.

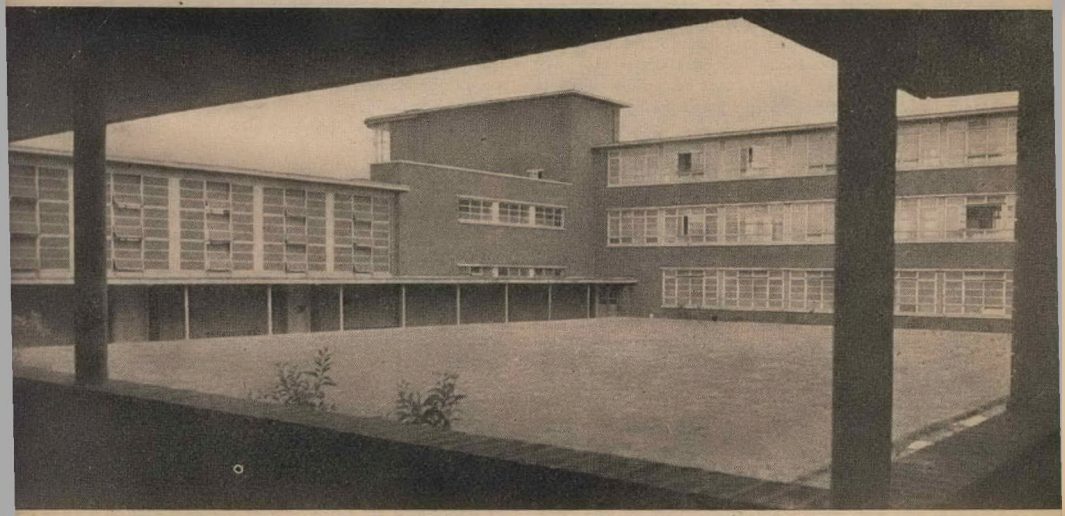
The Building contract was approximately £6,700 for the first portion and £38,700 for the main portion.

Total cost, exclusive of land, fencing and furniture, was approximately £54,700.

Cost per place (660 places), £83.



ABOVE : A view of the quadrangle corridor flanking the Assembly Hall.
BELOW : A general view across the quadrangle looking towards the main stair tower, with the Assembly Hall on the left and the classroom wing on the right.



The frontispiece, as well as the drawings of plans and projections illustrating the school, are reproduced by kind permission of "The Architects' Journal," London.

HOUSING FOR THE EX-SERVICEMAN

By a Serving Soldier—A. T. Falconer, M.C.Q.S.

A PAPER READ AT A MEETING HELD IN THE MOWBRAY TOWN HALL, CAPE PROVINCE, ON MONDAY, 20th NOVEMBER, 1944.

1.—A FRANK STATEMENT OF THE FACTS

THE PROBLEM.

Major Ueckermann (M.P., Nigel) recently stated that whilst there had been plenty of talk, not much has been actually done with regard to the huge problem of "Housing for the Ex-Servicemen." There is no doubt that his views are those of practically every serving soldier and ex-Serviceman.

Until now all we have had are vague promises. Some "experts" who have voiced their opinions take rather a pessimistic view and talk of subsidies, expropriation of land, etc., forgetting that all we require is a sound business proposition. We do not want charity or special terms. Many do not for one moment expect them.

It is reasonable to assume that there are some 30,000 men on active service from Cape Town and neighbourhood. In the event of 10 per cent. of these men being in a position to build or acquire their own homes, there will shortly be a demand for 3,000 suitable homes. Many of the others will require rented accommodation. It is imperative that all who can afford to build should do so as soon as possible, otherwise there is likely to be congestion (to put it mildly).

Prior to 1939 the expenditure of £150 on ground, a further £200 towards the buildings and a loan of the balance from a Building Society or elsewhere could go a long way in the average case. Loans and interest were repayable at approximately £1 per £100 per month over eight years. The fact remains that far too many people were paying comparatively high rents having regard to density of population and the land available for urban development.

What is the position to-day? Apparently in this land of open spaces such land as is available and convenient to town is being speculated in and may be held on to. Prices and dimensions of plots vary in different localities, but the following, taken at random from the columns of a local newspaper, are interesting :—

Fish Hoek (choice selection)	£50 to £600 per plot
Bellville	£200 per plot
Camp's Bay	£500 " "
Newlands (very select)	£1,200 " "

It is obvious that the introduction of control of land prices at this late stage is more than we can expect.

Building costs are up by anything from 75 to 120 per cent. and the finished job, containing, as it must, many substitute materials, is a somewhat inferior one. There is a big reduction in the rate of repayment of capital and interest, but the term of the loans has been increased. Will these rates and terms be maintained?

The prices ruling for such existing houses as are changing hands are "inflated." There is no need to dwell on the hopeless position in regard to rented homes and the rents being demanded for them, despite stout efforts on the part of the Rent Board.

The proportion of income required for house purchase or rent was bad enough pre-war. Now it is ridiculous.

LAND TENURE, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO URBAN DEVELOPEMENT.

Any solution of our problem must be based on the acquisition of land. It is the first and most important stage in the whole process of any home ownership plan or renting proposition.

The land prices previously quoted are the stumbling block, since without the necessary land on a reasonable basis we can do nothing at all. How many Servicemen are, or will be, in a position to invest an amount of £200 to £500 in the purchase of land, provided always they can get land and at these prices?

We must not be "insular" or "isolationist" in outlook. It is common knowledge that countless thousands in other lands are well on their way to acquiring homes of their own or renting homes at terms far more favourable than our own, even in pre-war years. In Great Britain (the oldest Dominion) urban developement has been tremendous. Details vary, but, thanks to keen and continued demand and clean, healthy competition to meet it, people of all classes are acquiring their own homes for cash payments of as little as £25 and monthly repayments of from £3 10s. to £6 10s. per month for periods of up to 25 years. These amounts do not include rates and taxes. Builders, Building Societies and Life Assurance Societies pooled their resources and offered all forms of comprehensive payments.

Let me assure you that a house costing £1,000 in Cape Town could not be erected in Great Britain for £500. Rates of wages here are higher, but of the total cost of a house, wages only amount to approximately 40 per cent. Our houses may be bigger, but the vast difference in climatic conditions and the disparity of structural details must be remembered.

The value of land in proportion to the cost of dwellings is approximately 5% in Great Britain, and therein lies the secret of their success in home building. No Scotsman would dream of purchasing land even if he were allowed to do so. He merely feuds or rents it by payment of an amount varying from £2 to £8 per annum (in perpetuity) and thereafter erects his home thereon. Both the land and the buildings are sold, rented, willed, bequeathed or otherwise disposed of in the usual way. Competition has killed all the old "feudal" restrictions. In England and Wales the long leasehold system is part of the common habit of the people. Leases of land for building purposes may be for any term, but 99 years is the general case. Ground rents are reasonable. Persons to whom land is feud or leased must adhere to the "Building Agreement," which defines the general conditions, the type and value of the buildings to be erected, etc. The unthinking person may quote the case of the wealthy landowners. Remember that whilst they may be doing very well, they are at least enabling others to benefit.

The advantages of leasehold of feud tenure of land are that its adoption brings home-ownership within the reach of thousands who could not otherwise attempt it. It expedites urban development and stimulates building.

The building and allied industries are a mainstay of trade and the state of the building industry is a prosperity indicator. Assuming that 3,000 homes could be acquired by us in Cape Town under existing conditions, it is reasonable to presume that the number might be doubled if not trebled under the suggested "leasehold" tenure of land. Those concerned may have little capital, nor do they require it, but their urgent needs call for the expenditure of possibly six to nine million pounds in building costs alone (£1,000 per home average). Consider the effect of building six to nine thousand homes and the factors this brings into play, including the increase in rateable values and the effect on rates. We are apt to talk in "awed" tones of thousands. In other lands it is tens of thousands.

People who talk glibly of new industries should note that industry requires manpower and these men require decent homes.

The question of what happens at the end of the term of the lease may be raised. Since the possible solution suggests that, in order to line up with the most up-to-date theory and practise, the State should own the land, I need only deal briefly with the subject of "reversion."

The Serviceman of 30 years of age will not be interested in 40 years, nor will his son be in 80 years' time. Few families remain in the same urban dwelling for 99 years, and all buildings depreciate. The ultra careful could insure against reversion to the State on the expiry of the lease of land and the buildings thereon as they then stand. Leases are capable of extension.

Any building erected on leased land, the lease of which has 40 to 50 years still to run, is just as valuable as one built on freehold land. Were the problem serious, thousands of people who are accruing the benefits of "leasehold" land tenure would be worried. We have no evidence that they are.

Every penny "sunk" in the purchase of land by a prospective home-builder (not speculator) is "dead" in so far as he is concerned. A man of 30 years of age who purchases a plot of land for £300 loses a lot. A wiser man of like age who leases the same ground at £2 per cent. per annum can afford the 10/- per month, and should he live for 40 years will only pay £240 in total. We may presume that his £300 has gone into the building, furnished it, educated children or earned a fair return.

The landowner and the home-owner are secure. Land is fixed and definable. It cannot readily be moved, defaced or damaged, and since we deal with urban development only it will be used exclusively for building purposes.

Urban land must be developed quickly and to the best advantage, by the best people. I am of opinion that the "leasehold" tenure of Crown lands is the only solution to our problem, and the good type of ex-Serviceman (no matter what his income may be) is surely a fit person to call for the application of this simple proposition. It may suit us, but the State will do well too. Add up all the annual ground rents with interest accruing thereon and provide over and above that for the reversion to the State of land and buildings at the end of 50 or 99 years. What a heritage for the future!

Housing + Industry + Employment = Collective Security. Look at the success Sweden has made of it.

It is clear that in any progressive State the "freehold" land tenure in respect of urban land has many disadvantages and is out of date. Rural land tenure is another matter, since the land is generally used for what it can produce; but that is completely outside the scope of this paper.

BUILDING COSTS.

Prior to September, 1939 (and even thereafter) one could build a good type of house for some £1,200 (exclusive of ground). What are we going to pay? Here are some figures based on a careful analysis :—

PRE-WAR.

Cost of House erected 1939. Total cost	£1,200
Material 60% = £720. Labour, etc., 40% =	£480

TO-DAY.

Cost of House erected 1939		£1,200
Add Increase in overall cost. Average 100%		1,200
	Total cost	£2,400
Deduct—Materials, pre-war	£720	
Increased cost 100%	720	
		1,440
Balance, being Labour, etc., 1944		£960
Deduct Labour, etc., 1939		480
		£480

Increased costs other than materials = £480 = 100% approx.

The finished job is a somewhat inferior one. Many materials are manufactured locally or within the Union and price control exists. The allowance made in respect of materials is a generous one.

What of the increase in costs other than materials? Increased rates of pay, cost of living allowances and a greater margin of profit to cover war risks may amount to some 40%. What of the balance?

Are all artisans skilled in their work?

If so, are they going all out 100 per cent. at a job they are being well paid for doing?

Speaking on the manpower question at the recent Building Trade Employers' Congress in Johannesburg, Mr. Gallagher (Rand) said :—

"The great Defence building programme has resulted in skilled artisans finding themselves working alongside half-baked and grossly inefficient fellows who had gate-crashed into the seats of the men who had joined the Forces."

Many master builders, artisans and other building trade operatives, both European and non-European, are doing good work in the Services. All artisans employed as such in the Forces are carefully trade-tested. Why do the master builders not call for the application of a similar test in the case of persons who are paid more for possibly doing less?

Far-seeing building firms are organising good staffs, and I have no doubt that actual building costs will fall. Wages may rise, but structural details will alter and so also will other economic factors.

It is unreasonable to expect to build a new home for less than £2,400 next to one built in 1939 for £1,200 but capable of fetching some £2,500 to £3,000 in the amazing property market of these days.

Remember the true purchasing power of money and beware of the wishful thinker. Are all other products of industry and manpower going to cost 100% more than they did prior to the war?

A POSSIBLE SOLUTION AND EXAMPLES OF ITS SOLUTION

GENERAL.

There are admitedly all types in the Services.

In the Forces and recognised ex-Servicemens' associations we have, fortunately, a representation of all trades and professions.

It is essential that these ex-Servicemen's associations appoint, without delay, and in each large centre, a really representative and active "Housing Committee."

This "Housing Committee" should :—

(a) Co-operate with Government and Local Authorities.

(b) Concentrate on their own areas and problems.

(c) Ensure that ex-Servicemen are not told where and in what manner of homes they must live.

(d) Avoid large "schemes" and arrange for the proper dispersal of the various income groups.

(e) Form utility housing companies as required, particularly with reference to renting projects and building for the lower income groups.

ACQUISITION OF LAND, ETC.

The "Housing Committee" in each area should carry out their own inspections and in co-operation with Local Authorities prepare as a matter of urgency the following :—

(a) List 1 of all land available for the types of projects the "Housing Committee" has in mind, including any land owned by Local Authorities, but not required for their own purposes, together with an estimate of fair market value.

(b) List 2 of any lands included in List 1, the owners of which may be desirous of disposing of their land at reasonable prices (including ex-Servicemen who already possess land).

It is suggested that upon receipt of these Lists 1 and 2 the Government or other authority acting on their behalf should:—

(1) Arrange for the speedy purchase of the necessary land, having regard to the requirements of the various local "Housing Committees."

(2) Carry out any improvements necessary to the land acquired and generally prepare the sites for building. In the case of undeveloped land all roads and services, etc., to be proceeded with.

(3) Vest all land so acquired in the State (Crown lands).

(4) By arrangement with the "Housing Committee" lease land so acquired to persons nominated by the "Housing Committee." Leases to be for periods of 50 or 99 years as agreed upon. Ground rents to be based on a maximum of £2 per cent. per annum of the average cost of the land, including any transfer expenses, cost of improvements, etc. The "Building Agreement" to be drafted on model lines. The renewal of leases upon expiry of their term to be optional, subject to a period of notice. Land required for "renting" projects to be leased in a like manner.

It has been suggested that land should, could or will be expropriated. The process is seldom employed for other building projects.

Why should our problem call for its application?

The solution suggested is a business proposition. Its adoption would do much to curtail further speculation in urban building land. The principles are capable of general applications and could easily be applied with beneficial results to housing generally, and, if need be, to essential industrial development.

There is little risk in acquiring land in urban areas. If not required for us it may well do for others.

It should be noted that many small Local Authorities and management boards would welcome the ex-Serviceman, but they have no land or funds available to purchase it. State ownership of land would give all Local Authorities an equal chance of assisting us.

ERECTION OF BUILDINGS.

Provided the State gives us the necessary land, the actual building of the homes could well be left to the local "Housing Committees" and private enterprise.

Housing for ex-Servicemen has, we are told, a "high priority rating," and we trust permission to build will be granted accordingly.

"Housing Committees" can quite easily co-ordinate the efforts and services of all legal men, town planners, architects, surveyors, builders, artisans, agents and merchants from the ranks of their own organisations. I have no doubt that they can prove that "Houses for Ex-Servicemen" can be efficiently and economically designed, built, supervised and, if need be, furnished complete by ex-Servicemen. That, surely, is the wish of all of us.

There is no room for the "owner-designer." The homes erected must and will be the best of their type, a credit to us, and to the State who made their erection possible.

The Building Societies and Life Assurance Societies are surely interested, since they have all the necessary funds for land purchase. Since it is suggested that the State will lease their land to us, and accordingly hold a "joint" interest in the buildings erected thereon, surely the State can utilise the resources of the foregoing societies to the full.

The cost of furniture has been mentioned. Modern design incorporates built-in fittings of all kinds. Cannot such furniture as we require be manufactured and sold to us by disabled ex-Servicemen?

It has been suggested that the Government may import materials or arrange for bulk purchases.

It would surely be enough to ensure that all available "cargo space" is devoted to essential building materials to the exclusion of cars and other luxury commodities. It must be presumed that soon after the cessation of hostilities such countries as do produce the building materials which this country must import will do all they can to see that we get them. The materials required for our schemes are a mere drop in the ocean. We must surely safeguard the interests of agents or merchants, some of whom have been on service or supported employees on service.

CONCLUSION.

Note the words of the Rev. G. H. Clayton, Bishop of Johannesburg, in his charge to the Diocesan Synod recently:—

"Only the State can prevent a group of its citizens from holding the whole community at ransom, and that group may be either representative of Capital or skilled labour, but woe to the land where the State is in alliance with such a group.

"Only the State can provide adequate health services and make universal education possible, but the State—or the Province—or the Municipality—might have to do other things because there is such a mess to clean up."

As Servicemen and ex-Servicemen we have put forward a reasonable proposition. We await the answer to our plan for collective security for 50 or 99 years.

EXAMPLES.

NOTE: All ground rentals based on £2 per cent. per annum. Ex-Servicemen to advance 5 per cent. of building cost. Loan of 95 per cent. repayable (capital and 5% interest) over a period of 20 years.

Case I:

				Per Month
Land Value	£100			
Building Cost	£800		Ground Rent	£0 3 4
Less 5%	40	£760	Repayable	5 0 0
			Total	£5 3 4*

Case II:

				Per Month
Land Value	£200			
Building Cost	£1,000		Ground Rent	£0 6 8
Less 5%	50	£950	Repayable	6 6 8
			Total	£6 13 4*

Case III:

				Per Month
Land Value	£300			
Building Cost	£1,500		Ground Rent	£0 10 0
Less 5%	75	£1,425	Repayable	9 10 0
			Total	£10 0 0*

It is obvious from the above what the economic rents of flats or terraced dwellings will be.

The above amounts do not include rates or maintenance. Rates may be on building only, since the land is State owned. The small amount of capital required is shown in each case, and there is no doubt that the Government could guarantee the difference between 5% and the usual 25% deposit in respect of buildings.

Loans at 4% in lieu of 5% in Case II would reduce the monthly payment by approximately 10/-.

*Approximately.

BOOK REVIEW



The Royal and Lansdown Crescents in 1819; from a plate by W. Watts.

BATH, by R. A. L. SMITH; B. T. BATSFORD LTD., LONDON

Mr. Smith has sketched the history of Bath from the Aquae Sulis of Roman times to what remains of the city after the infamous " Baedeker " raids of 1942.

In his survey he describes how the Romans established a spa which they named Aquae Sulis in the sheltered valley of the Avon, on the site of the powerful mineral springs, which poured forth at the rate of half a million gallons a day, from the depths of the earth. Here Roman legionaries and those in search of health and pleasure retired, after spells of duty along the dreary and inhospitable northern frontier. After the withdrawal of the Romans from Great Britain, the city declined in importance, the excellent baths which they had constructed silted up, their roofs collapsed, and dense undergrowth obliterated the flourishing resort.

Bath again emerged from obscurity during the Middle Ages, but this time as an important ecclesiastical centre which nevertheless gradually began to acquire a reputation for its healing springs. During Tudor and Stuart times, the Reformation and dissolution of the cathedral priory increased the power of the city's authorities, and Queen Elizabeth granted the citizens a charter in 1590 which contained very extensive privileges. The town expanded, but the bathing facilities were still primitive, and the rich and fashionable preferred to visit the Continental spas.

With the development of fashionable society at the end of the seventeenth century, the need arose for suitable fore-gathering places where society could meet and devote itself to its pleasures at various seasons of the year. Royal patronage established Bath as a summer rendezvous, and under the guidance of Beau Nash, who greatly improved the amenities of the city, laid down a " Code of Behaviour " for visitors, and generally organised the social life of the town, Bath became the focus of fashion and polite society.

It was during this flourishing period that the elder Wood and his son transformed the city by the construction of public buildings, the Circus and the Crescents, which ever since have endowed Bath with a civic dignity unmatched in Great Britain. Prior Park, with its delightful Palladian bridge, belongs to this same period. Camden Crescent, by John Jelly, and Lansdown Crescent, by John Palmer, also contributed to the fine architectural atmosphere of the city.

The later history of Bath is one of gradual decline as the development of new centres of interest for society encroached upon its popularity. It became an ideal place of residence for retired Government officials, Naval and Army officers, and fashion reluctantly gave way before respectability.

Mr. Smith's survey is excellently illustrated with photographs, engravings, portraits and caricatures, and his book gives a fascinating glimpse of the moving pageant of life in Bath which expressed itself so beautifully in building.

JOHN FASSLER.

PROFESSIONAL NOTES AND NEWS

NEWS OF PICASSO:

The liberation of France, and of Paris in particular, has set one wondering about the fate of those French artists who exerted such a considerable influence in the fields of painting and architecture before 1939. There is news in "The New Statesman and Nation" of September 16th, 1944, of Pablo Picasso. In "Picasso—A Glimpse in Sunlight" John Pudney sketches very vividly a meeting with the famous master in his Montparnasse studio. Apparently he has continued to work steadily through four years of war, and has filled a studio with a collection of pictures as yet unseen by the critics of a free world. Excusing himself as having no words in either French or English with which to praise or examine these works, Pudney does not attempt to describe the pictures in any detail, and we are left to interpret Picasso's remark that "a more disciplined art, less unconstrained freedom in a time like this is the artist's defence and guard."

It is not surprising that the painter of "Guernica" was unpopular with the Nazis and collaborationists. Picasso has made a collection of periodicals sponsored by the above political groups in which both he personally and his work are reviled. Undeterred, however, he continued to paint steadily, unmoved by the tremendous events that were taking place outside the walls of his studio. Pudney ends his sketch on a delightfully personal note; he describe's Picasso's bathroom, with its twin wash hand basins, for "either a hand in each, or an intelligent conversation with a friend while you wash." Picasso's reply to an enquiry if there was anything he needed besides cigarettes was surprising. Pudney says: "He showed me the worn wafer of soap which was the butt of his shaving stick," and he adds this shrewd thrust: "I thought of that legion of would-be painters whose beards testified to their aspirations: and I thought of the master with the thousands of pounds worth of painting upstairs who required only the means to shave."

OF FRANCE:

Since Dunkirk, France has been discussed freely and has generally been regarded in a very unfavourable light. It is refreshing, therefore, to come upon a nostalgic essay by Raymond Mortimer in the same issue of "The New Statesman and Nation," quoted above, in which he describes France with knowledge and deep understanding. He reminds us that for 300 years France has replaced Italy as the focus of civilisation, and that although generally poorer than ourselves, the French have been better educated in the art of living. How true his observation that "whereas we have a fortunate taste for compromise they believe with imprudent passion in principles. They are altogether too ready to sacrifice themselves—and incidentally their country —for an idea." The phrase "they believe with imprudent passion in principles"

awakened memories of the late nineteen twenties, when Le Corbusier, with much boundless energy, pressed forward the campaign for the recognition of contemporary architecture. Echoes crowded back "a house is a machine to live in"; "A city, it is the grip of man upon nature"; "To be youthful and full of health is to have the power to produce much, but years of experience are needed to produce well." Only a Frenchman could have expressed himself in this fearless and uncompromising strain. How surely Raymond Mortimer has touched the pulse of France!

J.F.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE TRANSVAAL PROVINCIAL INSTITUTE

The Annual General Meeting of the above Institute will be held in the main hall, Kelvin House, on 13th March, 1945, at 3 p.m.

The opening session for the appointment of scrutineers to check the ballot papers will be held at 10.30 a.m., and the meeting will be resumed in the afternoon as indicated above.

Members are urged to attend, as matters affecting Building Control and proposed revisions to the Scale of Fees, amongst other important items, will be discussed.

RAILWAY HOTEL COMPETITION

In view of the fact that the Railway Administration has decided to abandon the competition for the proposed hotel at Pretoria, the Central Council, Institute of South African Architects, wishes to draw the attention of members to the fact that no objection can be taken to the acceptance by any member of the profession of the commission for the above hotel.

January, 1945.

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