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Colin St. John Wilson et Alex Hardy

Prolongement de l'université de Cambridge, école d'architecture
(pages 423—426)

Le nouveau bâtiment est adossé à une bâtisse du 19ème siècle. Les matériaux utilisés sont partout visibles, sans crépi et sans peinture — sauf quelques pièces de bois. Les proportions des fenêtres, portes et autres sont basées sur le principe du modulor. La construction du bâtiment respecte les propriétés des différents matériaux utilisés jusque dans les plus petits détails. Plusieurs éléments constructifs généralement indispensables ont été éliminés pour cette raison.
Le bâtiment de deux étages est très riche au point de vue plan, et en même temps très clair et simple. Au rez-de-chaussée se trouvent: salle de séjour et les quatre salles des assistants. Dans le noyau central: dépôts, centrale du chauffage et une cabine téléphonique. L'air chaud est soufflé dans les quatre salles des assistants sans canaux.
L'étude poussée du bâtiment démontre avec quel soin et richesse spatiale l'œuvre est conçue. Evidemment les quelques plans et photographies de ce cahier ne peuvent remplacer une visite sur place. Une telle visite nous ferait découvrir une quantité de détails extrêmement bien étudiés: microphones, balcon de projection, etc.
Le bâtiment en question nous rappelle l'article de Jürgen Joedicke à propos de Hugo Häring. Mais peut-être faudrait-il ajouter une petite remarque à cet article: Certes, la forme correspondant à «l'organique» est juste et efficace, mais encore faut-il savoir doser l'importance des différents détails par rapport à l'ensemble. Nous ne croyons pas qu'un balcon de projection, aussi organique soit-il, puisse être le point d'attraction expressif de première importance d'une salle de projection: une infime partie d'un ensemble donné ne peut être accentué à tel point!

Summary

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Ludwig Hilberseimer

The Lafayette Park project in Detroit
(pages 392—398)

As in Chicago, the slums of Detroit are being progressively replaced by housing projects planned to accommodate the residents of the old districts or even new residents.
The site in question comprises 250 ha., of which 1/3 is already built over. The project is 10 minutes from the nearest shopping center and offers all the advantages of an urban neighbourhood. The 250 ha. are divided in the following way:

Multi-storey houses	91 ha.
1- and 2-storey buildings	109 ha.
Shops and others	17 ha.
Green zones and schools	47 ha.

The park is located in the centre of the district. The principal access routes are run around the center. The secondary streets are not laid in such a way as to tie together all the houses on "shortest possible routes," as is usually the case. The secondary access routes are deadends and serve only a few houses. In this way traffic is kept within bounds and the district is quiet. Moveorer, children are not exposed to traffic danger. These secondary routes have two lanes, thus permitting one-way traffic. Drivers get to their homes not along streets but by way of separate footpaths.
The school is located in the centre of the park. When the eastward part of the project is completed, there will be built two parking silos by the approach road and this will be done in such a way as to avoid the noise of cars. The open-air parking lots are disposed in the green zone in the shade of the trees.
The project comprises one-family row houses of 1 or 2 stories, six high-rise houses of 22 stories with three different kinds of plan. Each secondary street serves 10 rows of homes comprising 92 apartments all told. 8 rows are of 2 stories and contain 80 maisonnette apartments; 2 rows are of 1 storey and contain in all 4 3-room apartments, 4 4-room apartments and 4 5-room apartments. All the buildings have a basement—an exception in the U.S.A.—the garbage cans are collected and emptied not on the street but in the basement.
The parking lots for the 1-storey houses are slightly sunken in the ground. In this way they do not obstruct the view of the green zone. The apartments of these houses are most interesting: the kitchen is directly connected with the entrance, the dining area and the living-room. The disposition of the hallway is very well worked out. All the apartments of the project are air-conditioned. The City of Detroit supplies the steam used for heating, hot water, etc.

Wolfgang Wieser

Observations of the Editor
(pages 399—400)

The idiom of architecture is generally retarded in relation to technology. The chaos in terminology is such that very often discussions among architects have become almost impossible.
Certain concepts, such as that of "organic architecture" can lead us to false interpretations, while others, of widely disseminated usage, are misunderstood, as, e.g., "structure." This word, borrowed from the science of biology, means, as in the U.S.A., "construction" and "static" when architecture is involved. This restriction is entirely false and does not at all correspond to the scientific use of the word. The natural sciences speak of **"structure"** in the sense of a complete network of elements or processes. The totality of the complete elements of a whole entity is called **"system"**. Therefore there can also be anorganic, organic, sociological and technical systems, etc. Why not employ the word "structure" in architecture in its real sense? Moreover, we speak of elements communicating among different systems. This principle of **"communication"** could also be employed in architecture; is it not already used in physics, biology and sociology? The definitions "structure," "system" and "communication" can thus be utilized for any sort of spatial planning. Wolfgang Wieser draws our attention to this fact in his work "Organisms, structures and machines." We are reproducing in this issue a chapter of this study.

Helmut Hentrich and Hubert Petschnigg

Phoenix-Rheinrohr Skyscraper in Düsseldorf (pages 401—405)

The building in question, located in the centre of the city of Düsseldorf, is surrounded by a green zone. The metallic construction rests on a base of reinforced concrete having the shape of a tub, the building having to be sealed off from subterranean water. The construction is faced on the elevation with aluminium and glass; all the metallic parts are insulated against fire (Cf. Design Sheets). Special lifts permit convenient cleaning of the elevation.
The building is entirely air-conditioned. No window can be opened. A central core contains the lifts, all the ducts and conduits, the cloakrooms and WC. On the ground floor, entirely in glass, 8 lifts serve the 18 floors. The partitions of the offices are movable. A restaurant and kitchen can serve up to 1400 people during breaks. The three basement floors contain records, technical installations, etc.

Werner Blaser

A Maze (pages 406—407)

The walls are built so they can be scaled! The maze in question, in Basle, is composed of acacia sticks and elm planks. The organization is on the basis of the modulor. The idea of a play maze for children is excellent, and, moreover, the lay-out is highly ornamental: the play of spirals and the proportions of the different parts are very successfully worked out.

Alfons Barth and Hans Zaugg

Secondary District School at Möhlin
(pages 410—413)

The school is located on a playground. To the west of this site there are situated a gymnasium and a primary school. Two roads lead to the school. The arrangement of the entrance and of the classrooms is remarkable. A fresco by Elsa Burckhardt-Blum decorates the auditorium of the school. In front of the auditorium, on the large square there is an open-air theatre. The construction (reinforced concrete) is very clearly conceived.

Jürgen Joedicke

Hugo Häring (pages 419—422)

In northern Germany, in Schleswig-Holstein, there is located the Garkau property, which Häring built in 1923—24, by the side of the highway between Lubeck and Neustadt. The unusual curved plan of this building is for many the only memory left of a man who, just like F. L. Wright and Alvar Aalto, was one of the most renowned architects of our age. Moreover, Hugo Häring can be considered one of the most important architectural theorists of the 20th century. His theory of "organic construction" is new; in 1920 his theory is even opposed to that of Le Corbusier, it creates a new conception of function, it is against any sort of formalism.
Hugo Häring was born at Biberach in Upper Bavaria in 1882. Häring, Gropius and Theo van Doesburg are thus all in the same generation. After studying under Theodor Fischer in Stuttgart and in Dresden, Häring is active as an architect in Hamburg, and after the first World War at Allenstein. Later, in 1921—22 he settles in Berlin in quarters placed at his disposal by Mies van der Rohe in his office. Subsequently, Mies van der Rohe and Häring appear together in an exhibition of young architects with revolutionary ideas, "die Novembergruppe." Later on, Häring becomes a member of the "Ring," an organization comprising the élite of German architects: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Ludwig Hilberseimer, Ernst May, Bruno and Max Taut, Wassili and Hans Luckhardt, Richard Döcker, Otto Häsler, Otto Bartning, Hans Scharoun, Heinrich Lauterbach, Peter Behrens, Heinrich Tessenow and Hans Poelzig; Häring becomes secretary and "brains" of the organization. The membership list shows how impossible it is to think of a "common goal," of a well defined "line of approach." Their views are so contradictory that it is as idle to speak of a "Berlin school" as of a "Chicago school." Only the activist, revolutionary spirit unites the different tendencies. In 1933 the "Ring" is dissolved; while Gropius, Mendelsohn and Mies van der Rohe emigrate, Häring remains in Germany as director of a private art school. He leads a very retired life under the National Socialist regime. In 1943, Häring returns to his village birthplace, Biberach, where he dies after a long illness, on May 17, 1958.
These few salient facts give some idea of the life of a man compelled by circumstances to become a thinker. Häring's insights are progressively replaced by methods, by a theory of architecture.
It is perhaps helpful to begin with the famous "Garkau" building in an attempt to explain Häring's approach. How is this building different from others? What can be the theoretical principles eventuating in such an astonishing architecture? What discernible connection is there between the design and the construction? Consider the stable, the most interesting part of the executed plan. Häring seeks to define the optimum spatial relationship between livestock and fodder. He succeeds in his aim by grouping the 42 cows around an oval feeding-trough, placed beneath the ceiling opening and thus permitting continuous feeding in of hay from the loft above the stable. There are two reasons for the slope of this ceiling: on the one hand, more rapid transport of hay toward the central opening, on the other hand, better ventilation of the stable. Stale air rises towards the windows and leaves the stable through window-slits specially constructed for this purpose. These slits can be opened and closed at will. It can thus be said that the entire structure of the building depends on its function; likewise the design corresponds perfectly to the final effect which is sought for.
The stable for young stock, a continuation of the main stable that we have just described, is no doubt in keeping from the formal point of view. But here too function dictates the design above all. The experts all know that rectangular corners are dangerous for young animals. The young animals can be squeezed and crushed by the others in corners without being able to escape. The rounded angles prevent such accidents.
Also we should not fail to mention the proprietor of this agricultural building, Otto Birtner, whom we have to thank for the realization of this project. In 1920, owing to his knowledge and his experiences in the U.S.A., Birtner got the idea of creating a model agricultural plant. He was fortunate in finding Häring and their success was striking. Even today "Garkau" attracts many foreign agricultural delegations.
Moreover, the choice of materials and the construction details are perfect. To this day the buildings on the property are in perfect condition, which is not always the case of buildings dating from that period.
At right angles to the stable is the barn: a large shed accompanied by a secondary wing containing the necessary services and accessories. Like the stable, this building is entirely inspired by its proper function. Moreover, the construction of the shed is most interesting. Wishing to avoid beams, tie rods and other awkward structural elements, Häring chose a construction system for the roof consisting of wooden planks crossed and nailed (Zollinger construction) resting on a course of reinforced concrete. For reasons of economy, only timber was considered. There is no doubt that Häring is influenced by certain formal tendencies called "expressionist," but, as a general rule, his buildings are always inspired, as we have already observed, by their function.
The constructions of Michel de Klerk, the famous architect of Wendingen, do not really grow out of the very essence of the building; his designs are but external applications. Häring is certainly influenced by de Klerk, in the sense that he was acquainted with his buildings, but his work is quite different. For him, only the essential matters, only intellect leads to the right solution, to the real function, to the exact construction.
We find in Häring certain traits in common with A. Eibink, who tries to translate in formal terms the possibilities of reinforced concrete. But Häring goes much farther than Eibink: the design, the result of a certain construction, is not of paramount importance; only the ultimate aim of the construction counts: proper function and efficiency. The construction materials are but a means and not an end.
Some of the correspondence of Häring and Erich Mendelsohn is extant. Both lived in Berlin in 1920, and both are members of the "Ring." Mendelsohn's designs are in better correspondence to function than those of Klerk, but his quality is not the same as that of Häring.
In the same period as Garkau, Le Corbusier constructs the villa of La Roche-Jeanneret. There has never been a greater contrast between two buildings, and yet Häring claims that certain guiding principles are the same. He claims that two well determined stages constitute in sum all architectural activity: The first stage is concerned with needs, its end is efficiency and organic function. The second stage is concerned with the actual realization of the project. Whereas Le Corbusier seeks to achieve the organic by way of geometric determinism, Häring seeks to achieve the form corresponding best to organic efficiency. It is here that the two architects part company. When, for example, Le Corbusier says: "Design rests on geometry," his way of proceeding is entirely external. Or again: "Reinforced concrete is the construction material par excellence of Le Corbusier," and yet Le Corbusier has not really achieved the "organic" of reinforced concrete, he uses reinforced concrete only to "achieve the geometric purity of the design," etc.
Häring's activity is based entirely on one single axiom: To seek the design proper to the essence of things. According to him two principles have influenced architecture: First, the quest for the design proper to expression; second, the quest for efficiency and usefulness in the service of the given assignment. These two principles are for Häring antithetical and historically necessitated both at once. Häring speaks of "pregeometric" epochs when buildings, utensils and other tools are organic, that is to say, in perfect correspondence to their function, while architecture utilizes principally geometrical shapes: Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Classical and Baroque. "The useful" and "expression" are the great contradictions of architecture.
As with Louis Sullivan and F. L. Wright, the study of the nature of things in the real world leads Häring to organic design. Nature is the result of a clearly defined, useful and efficient spatial order. The essence of the nature of things leads to the right form, to the organic. "The building is an organ of its inhabitants." Häring's conception can be formulated in some such terms.
In 1928, at the time of the opening of the CIAM at La Sarraz, the ideas of Le

Corbusier and of Häring came into sharp confrontation. Le Corbusier calls for a "modern architecture," while Häring calls for "a new-style construction." Le Corbusier demands a return to geometric purity, Häring speaks of organic construction, etc. When all is said and done, it can be said that this confrontation was necessary: the clear simple language of Le Corbusier was likely to convince young architects of the need for a renewal.

Are Häring's principles still viable at the present time? We believe that the work of Hans Scharoun clearly reflects these principles. In 1957, for example, Scharoun seeks to create a concert hall in Berlin (competition in Berlin) aiming at the realization of a harmony of function between musicians and audience. Herbert von Karajan, head of the Berlin Philharmonic, will do everything he can to make this project a reality.

Häring has condemned the alternative "geometry" vs. "organism." In this way we are brought back to where we started: it will thus be necessary to study the conditions behind proper design, avoiding any sort of formalism or expressionism not in correspondence to the essence of the given assignment. When the problem is looked at from this standpoint, it can be said that Häring's conceptions are of paramount significance.

Colin St. John Wilson and Alex Hardy

Extension of the University of Cambridge, School of Architecture
(pages 423—426)

The new building is placed back to back with a nondescript edifice dating from the 19th century. The materials employed are everywhere visible, without rendering and without paint—except for some timber elements. The proportions of the windows, doors and others are based on the principle of the modulor. The structure of the building pays heed to the properties of the different materials utilized right down to the most minute details. Several structural elements, generally considered indispensable, have for this reason been eliminated.

The two-storey building is very rich from the point of view of the plan, and at the same time it is very clearly conceived and simple in line. There are located on the ground floor: day room and other assistants' rooms. In the central core: storage, heating plant and a telephone booth. Warm air is blown into the four assistants' rooms directly without the use of ducts.

The advanced intense study that went into the building shows how carefully and with what attention to spatial variety the project was conceived. It is obvious that the few plans and photographs included in this issue can by no means take the place of an on-the-spot visit. Direct inspection would show us a number of carefully worked out details: microphones, projection booth, etc.

The building in question recalls the article by Jürgen Joedicke on Hugo Häring. But perhaps this article calls for the following remark: To be sure, the design corresponding to the "organic" is the right one and is functional, but then again there is needed a knowledge of how to apportion the different details in relationship to the whole complex. We do not believe that a projection booth, no matter how organic, can be the expressive central feature of a given complex can not be accentuated to such a point!

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