

Zeitschrift:	Bauen + Wohnen = Construction + habitation = Building + home : internationale Zeitschrift
Herausgeber:	Bauen + Wohnen
Band:	17 (1963)
Heft:	5: Frankreich baut = France construit = France builds
Rubrik:	Summary

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 16.01.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Summary

Ionel Schein

France builds
(pages 177-182)

"One does not live merely in one's house, but also in one's neighbourhood, one's village or city."

(Cited from the 4th Economic and Social Development Plan, page 212.)

Can one, ought one to draw up a balance-sheet when it comes to architecture and town-planning, as is done for the marketing of artichokes? If so, how can this balance-sheet be placed in the proper evolutionary perspective without casting a slur on the defensive arguments invoked by architects and town-planners the minute one starts to judge them?

Looked at objectively, France—this land without which Europe would be truncated—the traditional country of bread, has actually done more with concrete than with wheat flour these last twenty years. And its problems, well or badly resolved, are problems aroused in the course of the distribution and sharing out not only of housing and potatoes, but rather, of culture in general and employment, meaning: roads, schools, hospitals, recreational facilities, etc. ... France has been created over the last twenty years by its builders and architects.

The past twenty years—this first dawn of a new life—have been exciting years: for France this period has been, as it were, a foetus, a corpse and a new-born child all in one. This triple tension is specifically French and, above and beyond that, anti-Cartesian. There reside in this simultaneity of disparate stages the seeds of great mistakes and of very great hopes—new and scarcely discovered implications along with clumsy and baneful innovations.

It seems curious that it is precisely architecture and town-planning that are forcing a convergence of all these considerations; but in France, town-planning is only beginning to make itself felt as a real factor in the everyday life of the French nation.

How large everything appears when we are to discuss the creation of millions of jobs through the establishment of new industries in this or that area! And what becomes in comparison the value (this is the essential question) of the functionalist dogmatism of having a bathroom located near a bedroom. There is the great dichotomy of which we in France are (barely) becoming conscious: we are reaching a stage of mature reflection in architecture and town-planning that implies a rupture in the traditional scale of values. The situation is still confused.

Nevertheless, if I say that we are planning systematically, I mean that town-planning is becoming Planning and that, despite the dead weight of a baneful educational system and a hidebound administration, ponderous and slow in operation, we are beginning to realize that the pleasure to be derived from a place, the intrinsic beauty of a building are no longer bound up solely with the sensibility of its creator, with the materials employed, with the proportions and the colour scheme, but that all that is but the resultant of a necessary will to build in a given demographic situation.

In France we have always realized that social structures are structures erected apart from naturalist or functionalist theories. We know in fact that we are building the man of the

future and his Society. This means planning of the whole environment. The way in which we conjugate architecturally our spaces, volumes and sites will determine the specific direction of future social, technical and economic evolution. We are trying to find out why architecture is no longer architecture as such. We are still actualizing the past, but the future is imposing itself, the great adventure is under way!

Let's look at a concrete case, familiar already to the biologist and the production manager. Automation drastically reduces working hours; our time-keepers make their computations; then the human energy engineers judge the "material" clean and free of all defects... now the man who organizes environments can go to work, he has his data, his forecasts, his graphs... What does all this have to do with the dazzling beauty and rigour (and sham) of high-rise apartment houses where the lift ascends at a speed of 4 meters per second and where the faces are covered with glass stucco, or with the refined colour scheme (subtle shade of greyish-blue) of a bathroom with two bidets? Now we take people and we make them live in a setting whose beauty is dependent on social truth. This new architecture which is being differently formulated in time and space is being born in France. Consider Cell No. 10A, an architectural planning unit, in a pre-fab housing plant. It is ahead of itself, man has not caught up with it. They still jam together on the Champs-Élysées and the Place de la Concorde. What a passion we have, after all, for applied archeology!

Let's go on:

Tiny atom-powered motors mass-produced permitting people to travel at will on the ground or in the air, over long or short distances, liberating them from roads, which cease to matter, they cease to exist, and cars with them. Education? Mass education is carried on via audio-visual means on an individual basis, with examinations four or five times a year; the school disappears from our lives, even as a notion. Production? Plants are mobile, small-scale and easily convertible. Industrial zoning vanishes as such, and man becomes happy in still another way, and his life becomes all the more enriched.

Planning creates this constructed connection among all social and economic factors: a kind of interpenetration of all activities at diversifiable degrees of intensity and at various levels of evolution.

The earth itself comes to belong to everyone. Man becomes man again in a new context, with new materials, with a new destiny, in a newly created setting.

I write all this out of my familiarity with the work of Jean Prouvé, who fully realizes, almost alone, that the world of the future will be dominated by a molecular transformation of the fields of architecture and town-planning, and that beauty will be implicit in it.

His vision of the world of architecture—whose basic elements which are catalogued, classified, standardized can be disposed in any order at will—embraces a simultaneity ranging from creation to consumption, entailing a "conjugation" of factory-made elements and their free arrangement in constructions defined in advance. In this way everything is transformed.

This is an architecture that is coming to life; it exists because the elements determining it exist. And in turn, it shapes and fashions these elements: that is why it is dynamic, an active principle.

At this juncture, two questions have to be taken up: the creation of new cities and the systematic planning of the economic and social structure. At the present time France is the only country with a capitalist economy that has planned its economic and social development.

The terms in which this planning is carried out are not always the right ones, but the very existence of such a programme gives French architects and town-planners an opportunity to integrate their creative work with the total framework of a living and evolving society, for it is by way of the Plan that one can equilibrate, can

give the country a new visage, can give coming generations a new environment in which to live. These things are only in their inception, and especially as regards town-planning, they are viewed from the bureaucratic angle. The instigators of the Plan still do not have the "planner's" vision, for it is only via town-planning that this vision can be acquired.

Like a forecast of future Planning are the new projects, what in popular parlance are called "the big complexes"; here in short are the new cities, they exist.

Firminy-Vert, the creation of the late Sive, along with Delfante, Marcel Roux, and Kling. The site itself contributed greatly to the success of the plan. Le Corbusier is now building here a youth center, an Unité d'Habitation and a chapel. Aside from its technical and aesthetic interest, this complex near St-Etienne (Loire) reflects a clear desire to construct in a social context.

Bagnols-sur-Cèze, created by the Candilis team (Woods, Josic, Brunache, Piot), is one of the first sutures effected in the tissue of an already existing town. The experiment is interesting both from the technical and the social standpoint. The large buildings are less satisfactory than the individual dwellings, the latter being exemplary.

Mourex, a new city created in the natural gas zone by Coulon and Maneval, was conceived as a whole to a greater degree than the other complexes of the same category. Here one feels that a new architectural idiom is being sought. The will is here, but success is achieved only in a few small buildings like the town hall, although the layout as a whole is clear and convincing.

We shall speak of Le Havre later on. As carried out, Perret's plan marks the end of the so-called "classical" era of contemporary French architecture. The meaning of the axis, for instance, changes almost completely after the completion of Le Havre.

Toulouse-le-Mirail was planned by the Candilis team as part of a National Competition. Here the architect-planner is not at all responsible for the programme evolved within very constrained limits by the local and central governments. However, Candilis and his associates have really imagined a new city, a "planned state" with a re-invention of the street and its traffic flow. Construction has begun on Mirail, and Candilis is full of confidence, even having filmed the project. The "big complexes"? Welfare architecture for the most part. A "necessary evil" to enable us to understand that the construction is not a gratuitous act, as the School of Fine Arts teaches, that every pencil stroke becomes precipitated, as it were, in a building, as part of the concrete fabric of society. These agglomerations have taken root mainly on the outskirts of big cities, where real planning was unknown, or misapplied. It is an act of social cowardice to go outside the city and build there, while leaving the ravaged city center to its fate. The case is still more grave in Paris, where the only hope lies in a reconstruction of the existing urban tissues. It is with definite intent that Paris is not taken up in this study (cf. "Paris baut" in the German journal *Baukunst + Werkform*, special number, and "Paris Construit", éditions Vincent Fréal, Paris), but in general the situation in Paris leaves much to be desired.

The so-called Reconstruction period 1943-1950 brought out two facts:

1. The non-preparation of planners, architects and governing bodies for the task that the experience of post-1918 could have led them to expect. The architects in particular have continued to suffer the baneful influences of the School of Fine Arts, where the instruction is eminently static and out of touch with reality, leading to a cultural pauperization with sometimes catastrophic results, as in the false regionalism of the reconstruction of the northern districts, etc. etc.
2. The emergence of a few great spirits: Le Corbusier (St-Dié, La Rochelle); Perret (Le Havre, Amiens); Lods (Mayence, Sotteville); Beaudouin (Strasbourg, Antony); Pingus-

son (Sarrebruck); Lurçat (Maubeuge and St-Denis), all distinguished by a real intellectual grasp of the situation. This period is bound up with the name of a man who was devoted to the cause of architecture and town-planning: **Claudius Petit**, for many years Minister of Reconstruction. It must not be forgotten that he paved the way for many later developments.

Those cited above all have one characteristic in common: their source of inspiration, the CIAM and the Charter of Athens. Two of them, **Le Corbusier** and **Lurçat** deny any functionalist tenets, although some of their creations are functionalist in effect.

The town-planning principles involved in St-Dié and La Rochelle by Le Corbusier remain two great lessons for the creation of modern urban projects. These complexes do not spring from a juxtaposition of volumes and functions (as is the case with nearly all the other architects) but from a highly personal conjugation of these same elements and from a concerted vision of man in nature.

Beaudouin is a kind of arbiter, possessing a markedly pragmatic outlook. He speaks always of "composition" and invests the word with a quasi-anarchic content.

In addition to all these experiments, mention must be made of the Unité d'Habitation in Marseille.

Thus the Reconstruction is an epoch of experimentation, of lost opportunities and of finished projects that are beginning to determine the scale of French needs. At the same time there is decanted, as it were, the content of the concept of town-planning. Everywhere there is a will to imitate, to transcribe, to work on a petty scale. Paris becomes provincial, and the Provinces become Parisian: with big "cakes" going up everywhere.

This is the second period: a certain maturity becomes evident, sincere no doubt, but still without doctrine, lacking any concerted plan on a nation-wide scale. Good regional plans make their appearance, e.g., the reorganization of the Rhone Valley by Philippe Lamour. But not enough was done to meet urgent human needs, bureaucracy, the financial outlook as usual blocking the way. The State's money should yield a quick return, which cannot be expected of beautiful free architecture fashioned for human beings to live in. Nevertheless a few good things were done in spite of all this, some of them distinguished for their experimental and inventive quality, outnumbered though they are by projects carried out with no regard for people, landscape or materials.

Lods created an enchanting plan for Mayence and a less happy one for Sotteville, an example of unbridled functionalism. His experiments with pre-fabrication fall far short of his verbal brilliance when defending them.

Perret does not have the highest regard for Le Corbusier. His Le Havre plan looks grand on paper, but it has to be stated that this grandeur, on the human and social level, is hollow, an impressive skyline at its best when viewed from the ocean.

Pingusson at Sarrebruck, with Menkes, Sive and Marcel Roux, is certainly a great planner, but his naive goodness of heart lead him to failure when it comes to practical realization, but he is one of the rare architects that transcend their administrative function; he has really created spatial configurations and meaningful volumes that are based on vital socio-economic data.

The following can be cited as people who are truly serving the cause of contemporary architecture and town-planning.

Angers and Puccinelli work in Paris. They do not hesitate to "volumetrize" the old skin of façades, but the result is too commercial—handsome packaging.

Aillaud is a poet, many regarding him as merely a fantasist, but in fact he takes man into a new world invented by him and makes him happy there. He is not concerned with theory, he invents.

Albert is a man who at least once in his life had the courage to break with his past. And when he broke with it, he began to invent. He collaborates

with technical men and translates their principles into architectural terms, working mainly with tubular steel structures.

Allegret is at the present time the only young planner-architect who has had the courage to do what we all wish, to organize his work on a team basis. His is the spirit behind a firm where town-planners, sociologists, geographers, engineers all fraternize in a spirit of exciting research.

Andraut and Parat have retained a great deal of their original virtuosity. Like all young architects in France, they have had little opportunity to apply their architectural and planning theories, but their Cathedral of Syracuse, their Imaginary Space project at the Paris Biennale in 1961, etc. display a deep awareness of the architect's responsibilities.

Auzelle has contributed to the inauguration in France of scientific town-planning. He is a teacher, he writes and he conducts basic research, he is an architect. His complex at Neufchâtel-en-Bray is one of the most representative creations of typically French urban architecture.

Bernard represents once more the faith in an architecture of design. He is to be singled out for that alone, and also because of his simply conceived powerful church at Caen.

André Bruyère possesses a great imagination and a lyrical gift. His creativity is wholly free. Like few architects, he identifies himself totally with the given assignment, both at the draughting-board and on the construction project. This is shown clearly by his recently completed hotel in Martinique with its truly extraordinary design.

Bossard is another poet-architect in the line of Le Corbusier and Aillaud. This is clearly shown by his housing complex at Créteil.

Chenut is a town-planner who is almost unknown, but he ought to be, especially for his research on the industrialization of habitable zones. He has also done a remarkable history of the CIAM.

Coulon is a precisionist who puts the main stress on the technological factor.

Candilis, Woods, Josic, Brunache and Piot represent a considerable creative force. They have succeeded in imposing their point of view because they are organized in a team. Their production is enormous. Candilis, owing to his Mediterranean origins, creates buildings that need sun, and they can be beautiful.

Chaneac is a visionary, and his architectural formulations are admirably logical and they possess real beauty.

Dubuisson is saturated with Architecture, a man who ceaselessly experiments. Today he is the interpreter of the younger generation. His plans are always precise and careful, possessing a special physiognomy of their own.

Dufau expresses in his work not so much his incisive character as the power of his clients. Has concentrated on banks and office buildings, etc.

Fayeton, engineer and architect, often risks saying just what he thinks. He locates architecture half way between saying and doing. He is equally at ease with the power station and the private home. He is simple and sincere, and never hesitates to correct himself. Mention should be made of his Chevilly-la-Rue complex, that of l'Hay-les-Roses, etc., where the weaknesses of humdrum architecture are left behind.

Gillet is an experimenter rooted in an intellectualized conception of the constructed work. Some examples are the theatre at Valenciennes, the Tower of Roubaix, the French Pavilion at the 1958 Exhibition in Brussels.

Ginsberg is noted for a polished elegance, e.g., in his entrances, roofs and gardens. He stresses careful execution and his detailing is precise.

Gomis pays great attention to the landscape, and gives an impression of sincerity.

André Gutton is a very conscientious professor of town-planning and architecture. Some of his creations are characterized by profound thought

(electronic factory near Grenoble, housing complex in Dempergne). Although his work remains true to the French architectural tradition, his attitude, unlike that of so many others, towards contemporary revolutionary developments in architecture is by no means a hostile one.

Kowalsky is a kind of delirious mystic visionary. He concedes to buildings a new truth of their own and novel designs. His inventions know no spatial limits, and the mathematical formulation of each of his creations gives them a kind of power which is transmuted in material terms into reverie.

Herbé is a man of vast contrasts. He always approaches an assignment by stages, eliminating one obstacle after the other.

Lery is one of the best experts on the whole complex of problems bound up with town-planning. Knowing the details, he invents everything from the ground up; he knows what town-planning is.

Lopez regards architecture and town-planning as political acts, and he is not far wrong. His work led to the creation of a Study and Documentation Commission for Paris.

Nothing new can really be said about **Le Corbusier**. He is above all a furious worker, impelled by a vast desire to give. No one like him is so concerned with the total beauty of a setting. And what has he been permitted to do? Next to nothing! What counts with Le Corbusier is the enormous continuity of his work. But he already belongs to history. His lesson: to let the raw material evolve according to its own laws.

Lagneau has undertaken the most varied programmes, housing, museums, factories and hotels.

Marot is young and brilliant, winner of Grand Prix of Rome, is consolidating his position. His inspiration is organic, as can be seen in his church at Troyes.

Wogensky is silent and secretive; he left Le Corbusier but has not forgotten him. His house at St-Rémy-les-Chevreuses carries with it a will to "thought disorder"; that of St-Brévin is implacable, perched on its concrete paws; and his St-Antoine hospital is a thing of beauty.

Zehrfuss has perhaps an architect's vision of the world, but will he ever succeed in thinking like a builder, but his constructive idiom remains confused.

And who are the others who are still inventing and creating, who are building and often enough crying with despair: where are all the other young architects and planners who know they are right and who do not speak out? Let this Clandestine Architecture come out from its hiding-place!

As for the training of architects in France, there is needed a basic reform. Training proceeds along stereotyped lines leaving the student in doubt and lessening his powers of perception. The architect is without culture, a by-product of contemporary French society. The architect and the town-planner, who ought to be contributing effectively to creating a new environment for the future, are given merely executive functions. The result is an actualization of the past and an alienation from the objective evolution that is called for.

The place of consulting engineers is an important one in France. Mention should be made of the following:

Sarger has been instrumental in giving many young architects a feeling for new types of structure in reinforced concrete. His current work on cables is destined to have a great future.

Sarf made interesting structural contributions during his association with Albert.

Duchateau is widely versed in many fields, **Ketoff**, an associate of Prouvé always comes up with plans that are implicitly elegant, and finally, **Le Ricolais**, especially well known in the USA and the USSR, is inventing a whole family of new shapes.

Architecture critics have over the last five years or so established architecture as an activity of general import, and at the same time they have awakened public interest in what is after all a social undertaking and have

elaborated standards by which to evaluate the leading developments in town-planning and architecture, and that along historical lines.

The most notable writers, whose work possesses a truly positive value, include Michel Ragon, Françoise Choay and Guy Habasque.

Guy Habasque devotes his studies to the various tendencies in architecture and to the trends of thought of certain individual architects.

Michel Ragon is closely associated not only with constructors of space but also with painters and sculptors; he does not merely establish facts, he is not satisfied simply to judge things good or bad; rather, he seeks to clarify for his readers the real significance of present-day architecture in all its manifold variety and beauty. He makes it his job to bring architecture home to all segments of the population.

Pierre Restany concerns himself in his articles with painting and sculpture and often with related aspects of architecture.

Mention should also be made of **Bernard Champigneul**.

Pre-fabrication of structural elements is more developed in France than elsewhere. Three highlights in the evolution of pre-fabrication in France are Le Corbusier's projects (Citrahan and Domino houses)-the Drancy complex by Lods, Beaudouin and Bodiansky-prototypes, plans and projects by Jean Prouvé in his Maxeville factory (Nancy).

Prouvé is one of the few technicians capable of setting up a real construction industry such as will soon be required by architecture and town-planning.

What in effect are the two systems being employed at the present time, those of Camus and Coignet? It is like a recipe: you take cement, sand and gravel, dosage according to number of flats to construct, mix in mould designed by some architect, add a few individual ingredients, like glass stucco, aluminium windows, etc., cool, remove mould, and serve, with sharp sauce (the price!), employing little staff but plenty of trucks ranging up to 80 km. This is the parody that is not too far from the reality.

The system itself is basically interesting, and fifteen years ago it stood for real progress. But the rise of synthetic products and the large-scale employment of light metals have changed all that. The system is now incapable of adapting to new exigencies. And this industry has not yet set up a research institute.

Other methods exist: wood, steel, even granite have their pre-fabricators in France. But until the construction industries elaborate a common policy with the collaboration of technical men in all fields, we shall have nothing but a kind of parody of progress in this sector.

There are many organized groups and associations in France devoted to architecture and town-planning, not all of them strictly specialized in character. There is, as in the case of pre-fabrication, a grave lack of co-ordination and above all a lack of a central research institute. The Architectural Studies Circle comes closest to meeting these requirements. It organizes conferences, awards prizes that have brought recognition to deserving men. Mention should also be made of the Central Union of Decorative Arts, with its exhibitions and lectures which help to educate the public in respect of industrial aesthetics, town-planning, architecture and interior decoration, etc. Useful Designs seeks to create a favourable climate between industrialists and artists. Young men in the field lack a centre where they can compare notes and obtain inspiration from competent older men. So much needs to be done in the way of coordinating the efforts of industry, architects, planners, the State, and, above all, the public needs to feel concerned.

France is remaking itself, despite various false starts criticized above, and the entire world is remaking itself in a new image, and the world has its eyes on France. How is it possible not to re-invent the total environment of society? How is it possible not to prepare an entire new world of forms? An irreversible trend is in progress in France: youth is coming into its own.

Town-planning projects (pages 189-192)

The concentrated presentation of twelve plans by ZUP*, followed by the Toulouse-le-Mirail complex and some extracts from the Competition for a Winter Sports Center in the Vallée de Belleville, ought to make clear to the reader that architects at the present time in France are coming up with a great variety of "town-planning" ideas. Formalism, false traditionalism, outmoded functionalism, neo-romanticism, resuscitated naturalism are all useless repetitions as much as they are new inventions! That's what is so confusing. What is lacking is an authentic renewal, succulent inventiveness, the courage to forget what has already been done. None of the new components of town-planning and architectural programmes have anything old about them; all problems have to be thought out again from the start, and we must not be content with a new type of façade dressing or even with new building plans distorted we know not how. However, the development that has taken place from the exciting complexes of Sarcelles and Poissy (1 and 2) to the fantastic world (just the right blend of poetry and mystery) of the complexes of Forbach (12 and 13) is long, difficulty and courageous.

We come to the following conclusions: The confusion of Sarcelles; the indifference to the human being at Poissy;

the formalism of the axes at Montreaux; passing on to a certain cohesion evidencing:

knowledge of the terrain at Allones and Lormont, or again, too much arbitrariness at Annecy or grandiloquence at Mons-en-Bareuil, winding up with town-planning creations that give every evidence of a controlling conception:

the excessively disorganized plan for Pierrelatte;

the excessively severe plan for Fontenay-sous-Bois;

the apparent spontaneity of the plan for Montpellier;

the very traditionalist reconstitution of the plan for Saint-Paul-les-Trois-Châteaux.

There remain the two programmes concerning Forbach:

the creative man goes out to meet the consumer, his brother, as in music!

Toulouse-le-Mirail National Competition of 1961 (pages 193-194)

The Latin nations in Europe (as opposed to the English-speaking nations) have not yet learned, since the beginning of the century, how to go about creating an urban complex as an integrated whole. We are tempted to say that Toulouse-le-Mirail is a first serious attempt in this direction. Tony Garnier and Le Corbusier have laid down the formal and functional bases of contemporary town-planning schemes; Perret has given a false image to rational grandeur; the Italians have tried some exciting experiments (Matera, for example: ... but that's something quite different!). Candilis has embraced nature and turned his back on the motor-car; he has chosen to lead man into his city via an adequately expressed architectural will. The experiment is now under way; a dangerous game, but an exciting one, has been initiated! Best of luck!

Belleville-Plan for a Winter Sports Center (pages 195-196)

The creation of a winter sports center with a sleeping capacity of 25,000 has been for the team of Candilis-Perriand-Prouvé a chance to give us a striking example of renewal in town-planning and architecture in a mountain area.

Integrating their complex with the given terrain with discretion and intelligent insight; avoiding all short cuts, whether formal or functional: cars have no access to the Center; creating diversified volumes that are all in keeping with their purpose and operation-the authors of the plan have accomplished an enormous architectural act, pure, beautiful and intelligent.

The contributions of Charlotte Perriand and of Prouvé to the general plan by Candilis are quite exceptional ones!

Jean Prouvé

House at Saint-Dié
(pages 200-201)

In its intelligent simplicity, this construction conceived and realized by Jean Prouvé, employing the elements forming part of his current architectural idiom, is a typical example of present-day housing: flexibility in the utilization of space and continuous integration of interior and exterior.

J. Dubuisson

The Cormontaigne residence, hotel with 1200 rooms, at Thionville
(pages 202-203)

Less satisfactory on the level of social organization and town-planning than on the plastic level, this complex is part of a new architectural cycle in the development of J. Dubuisson. A refinement of line is almost taking the place of the interior volumetric researches, up to now so dear to the architect. The expressive force passes to the exterior and the very close disposition of the volumes makes them all the more impressive.

Architect: Breuer

Associated arch.: Gatje

Superintending arch.: R. and M. Laugier

IBM Research Center at La Gaude near Nice
(pages 207-208)

Breuer, an Americanized European, has returned to build for Americans in Europe, this time in France, on a precipitous site in the south of France. This is a situation giving rise to the creation of fundamental values aiding in the comprehension of the uncompromising vigorous architecture thus willed into being by its creator. What an example for the nonentities that we are, to let ourselves, here on the soil of France, be devoured by the moths and the myth of Bureaucracy and Big Business! Obviously we would have liked Nervi to be present to finish off the structure! – but architects in all countries are always proud individuals. The building is handsome; the detailing is excellent (and it is said that French firms do not know how to attend to details!) and the building was certainly well financed.

Architects: Candilis, Woods, Josic, Dony

Chief planner: Coquerel

Urban complex of Bagnols-sur-Cèze
(pages 210-211)

At Bagnols-sur-Cèze there has been undertaken within five years the organic welding together of two different urban units: the old and the modern. If the architecture at times, no doubt by oversight, has a purely decorative function, the whole complex of buildings, their interrelationship and their design proper (especially the individual apartments) display very interesting treatment, and one that is characteristically Mediterranean.

Architects: Salier und Courtois

Assistant: Sadirac

Office building for the Marie Brizard et Roger concern at Bordeaux
(pages 216-217)

It is rather rare in France for the severity in the design of a building's skin to possess as much life as that of the building presented here. It is also rare for the interior flexibility to be so total; and as true. It is these qualities of integrity in the conception and in the realization that give to the building its real value.

Architects: Andrault and Parat

La Chancellerie housing complex at Bourges
(pages 218-219)

Few housing projects have any respect for the governmental and financial

regulations in force and at the same time comprise an approximately satisfactory architectural expression of the life of an agglomeration of 231 families. The terrain on which the buildings are sited, the tension set up among the various volumes, the differentiation of the spatial entities and the surfaces, the gradients, the correctly placed breaches in the walls at ground-floor level – all this invests this architecture with a modesty and sobriety that make it exemplary.

Architects: Lagneau, Weill, Dimitrievitch and Audigier

Engineers: Prouvé, Lafaille, Sarger and Salomon

Assistant: Jansovic

Sculptor: Adam

Museum and Cultural Center in Le Havre

(pages 222-224)

Architecture here stands at the service of culture and social welfare; museum science, sclerotic for more than a century, is here reborn; man and the painting, man and the sculptured figure again confront one another in a meaningful relationship – and what is more, man here once again confronts man! The materials and the proportions, the colour scheme and the light, the functions and the technical functioning of the building respond to new needs; the interplay of the totality of the structural elements contributes greatly to the success of the whole complex. Winning team: Candilis, Josic, Woods, Piot, Dony, François, architects and engineers.



Ionel Schein

Zu unserem Heft

Ein Heft über Frankreich ist ein Heft, das Einblick in eines europäischen Landes Experimentierwerkstatt gewährt. Ein Heft über Frankreich ist weniger Dokumentation fertiger und perfekter Leistung, als viel eher Präsentation interessanter Versuchsreihen, kühner neuer Konstellationen und Ideen.

Unser Pariser Korrespondent, vor 5 Jahren Initiator der durch viele deutsche Städte wandernden und vielbeachteten Ausstellung »Paris baut«, die er mit dem jungen Fotografen Cugini aus Zürich und dem jungen Grafiker Hans Weckerle, damals an der Werkkunstschule Hannover zusammen mit deren Leiter schuf, hat seine kritischen Augen diesmal in ganz Frankreich herumwandern lassen.

Vielleicht dient das Heft sogar als Führer zur modernen Architektur in Frankreich. Sein Aufbau geht davon aus, denn es zeigt nacheinander, im Uhrzeigersinn wandernd, Bauten aus den vier Regionen der Himmelsrichtungen. An einigen Stellen verweilt der Betrachter länger, dort, wo besondere bauliche Leistungen ein näheres Betrachten verlangen.

Nicht umsonst hat der Gärtner Monnier am Ende des vorigen Jahrhunderts als erster Betonkisten mit Eisendraht armiert, aus dieser Erfindung ist derjenige Baustoff entstanden, in dem die französischen Architekten heute Vorbildliches leisten. Nicht umsonst ist in Nancy ein Leichtmetallkonstrukteur am Werke gewesen, der wegweisend war für eine Ideenreihe, die zu Aluminiumbauteilen über die ganze Welt hinweg führten.

Frankreich hat immer wieder Pionierleistungen hervorgebracht, denken wir nur an die kühnen Neuschöpfungen auf dem Sektor des Automobil- oder des Flugzeugbaus.

Wir wünschen, daß unser Heft von dieser Erfinderfreude auch der französischen Architektenkollegen lebendig Zeugnis ablege.

Sämtliche Aufnahmen in diesem Heft wurden von den Fotografen Joly, Paris, und Cugini, Zürich, gemacht.

Die Redaktion

Notre volume

Ce numéro de la France est avant tout une série de prises de vue d'un « atelier d'expériences » au sein d'un pays européen.

Présenter l'architecture française n'équivaut pas à une documentation complète d'une architecture aboutie; c'est beaucoup plus une orientation concernant une série d'essais, un nouveau mode de pensée, et des idées neuves.

Notre correspondant parisien avait déjà initié, il y a cinq ans, l'exposition « Paris construit » – réalisée par le jeune photographe de Zürich Cugini, le jeune graphiste Hans Weckerle qui fréquentait alors l'Ecole des Métiers de Hannover et par le directeur de cette Ecole – elle avait été présentée dans bien des villes allemandes où elle jouissait de la plus grande attention du public.

Cette fois-ci, notre correspondant a posé son œil critique sur la France entière. Peut-être ce numéro peut-il servir de guide pour l'architecture moderne française, car il se compose de quatre parties montrant les constructions récentes des quatre régions des points cardinaux de la France. On montre quelques réalisations plus en détail, car leurs qualités constructives méritent notre attention.

Ce n'est pas pour rien non plus qu'à Nancy un constructeur de panneaux en fil de fer, au siècle dernier. Cette invention a engendré un matériau de construction moderne que les Français manient d'une façon exemplaire.

Cé n'est pas pour rien non plus qu'à Nancy un constructeur de panneaux en métal léger avait provoqué l'application de ses idées constructives dans le monde entier.

La France n'a cessé d'être un pays de pionniers, il suffit de rappeler les créations constructives nouvelles dans le domaine de l'automobile ou de l'aéronautique. Nous souhaitons que ce numéro puisse illustrer ce même génie d'invention qui habite nos collègues architectes français.

Toutes les prises de vue de ce numéro sont faites par les photographes Joly (Paris) et Cugini (Zürich).

La rédaction

For our issue

An issue devoted to France reveals the fact that here is a country which is, as it were, one vast experimental laboratory. An issue on France is not so much a presentation of finished architectural achievements as it is of interesting experiments, bold new undertakings and ideas.

Our Paris correspondent was, 5 years ago, the initiator of the travelling exhibition "Paris Builds", which aroused keen interest on its tour of Germany; he was assisted at that time by the young photographer Cugini from Zurich and the young graphic artist Hans Weckerle, and he received support from the Hanover School of Applied Arts, where the project was created. This time his roving critical eye takes in all of France as its field of study.

This Issue will perhaps serve even as a guide to modern architecture in France; it is conceived as such, for it looks at projects in the major regions of France visited in clockwise order around the map. At some places the observer will want to linger, especially where real architectural achievement calls for closer inspection.

The garden designer Monnier at the end of the last century made a real contribution when he came out with the first concrete casings reinforced with steel wire; this invention has led to the modern construction material employed by French architects in creating their truly outstanding buildings. The same thing applies to a light metal constructor in Nancy, who was the pioneer for the development that ended in the use of aluminium construction elements throughout the world.

France has always been a pioneer – we need only recall what the French have accomplished in the field of automobile or aircraft design.

We hope that this Issue adequately documents the inventive and creative élan of French architects as well.

All photographs in the Issue were made by the photographers Joly, Paris, and Cugini, Zurich.

The Editors