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Summary

On this Issue

European cities are being confronted by manifold problems. There is, to begin with, the traffic problem, for which there does not seem to be any solution; this has been brought about by the ever growing number of motor vehicles, and only the most farreaching building programs can hope to cope with the problems created by both moving and parked cars. And then there is the extremely pressing housing problem, which is constantly being aggravated. These problems are to be tackled not only by the establishment of new satellite towns; they also require a thorough-going reorganization and replanning of the already existing old urban districts. On the one hand, the depopulation of the urban centres and the resultant concentration of the service industries in these centres constitute a serious problem, from the traffic standpoint as well. On the other hand, resettlement in peripheral areas around big cities and the construction of new towns or urban districts give rise to "dormitory towns" which again aggravate the traffic situation in our urban complexes to a degree that almost defies solution.
The Constructa II conference held in Hanover in January of this year, with meetings of experts and addresses by internationally known figures, furnished abundant material for discussion. Our report, "Realities and Visions in Housing and Town-planning", throws some light on what was discussed at that conference. Jane Jacobs and Prof. Mitscherlich, the prophets in the debate concerning the shape and the future of our cities, have made important contributions to all aspects of this question.
This Issue accompanies this theme of mass housing with a number of examples from Switzerland, Germany and the USA. In this conection, the Lochergut in Zurich, on a centrally located site in the midst of 19th century working-class housing, is the outcome of an important building decision, namely, of a modification of the building code in the direction of increased, considerably increased, utilization possibilities. This project points the way toward a solution of the problem of urban depopulation. The same can be said of the American example included in this Issue. The two examples of high-rise buildings in tower or slab form, from Morges and from Ludwigshafen, represent peripheral projects that are relatively concentrated in design. We have long since abandoned the view that low-silhouettes must prevail on the peripheries of cities. There is less and less room for the erection of single-family houses on urban sites. There is simply not enough land available for this type of housing, which demands ample space, unless our cities are allowed to spread chaotically like the big cities in America. This, however, is no longer possible in the ordinary Central European urban area. For this reason, more concentrated types of housing are sought after, either high-risers or single-family complexes in strip and patio design.
On sloping sites there is offered the possibility of building terrace projects, an example of which from Switzerland is shown in this Issue. This type is to be evaluated very positively.
The architect Klug devotes a careful study to the catastrophic traffic problem from the standpoint of the pedestrian, with many examples from Europe and the USA. Here a set of questions is beached which is of the most urgent importance for our age.
As a bit of recent news we conclude the Issue with the latest creation of Richard Neutra, a house in the Ticino, a fine example of the architect's humanly supple architectural style and of his philosophy of living in the single-family home. Zie.

Karl Flatz, Zurich

"Lochergut", centrally situated residential complex in Zurich

(Pages 125–133)

On the way out of Zurich, in the direction of Baden and Basel, 10 minutes on foot from the central business section, there is a site measuring 16,000 sq. meters, at first intended for public buildings, later reserved for the erection of municipal housing.
In 1958, when the project was entered for competition, the principal job of the architects was to exceed the utilization quotient (1.5) fixed by law. The papers submitted at the time of the competition called for a construction program of around 2.5. (This utilization quotient represents the sum of the upper floor surfaces divided by the total area of the site.)
The project adopted and later realized comprised 461 flats. The jury made the following commentary on the project selected: good division of the main unit, excellent proportions in the adjoining buildings, complex sited and faced advantageously in relation to the surrounding buildings, good design of the ground floor and the entrance halls of the high-rise units, beautiful flats, well dimensioned and well ventilated.
In the following years, the Cantonal authorities lowered the number of flats to 351.
At the present time, the complex presents a row of high-rise residences dominating Seebahnstrasse. There are 7 towers having 7 to 21 floors and attaining heights of from 24 to 61.5 meters. Thanks to the orientation of the row of buildings, the flats in the residence towers enjoy sunlight throughout the day.
The flats have from 1 to $4^1/_2$ rooms. In addition to the 351 flats, the complex also comprises an office building, workshops, a supermarket, 12 small shops, a restaurant with a roof garden and a day nursery. The site was excavated to accomodate a garage for 400 vehicles, an air-raid shelter for 1400 persons, a medical station and civil defence facilities.
Part of the construction was carried out in concrete, according to a Swedish technique described in "Building + Home", Vol. 2/65. Large coffering planks were employed, this permitting rapid concreting of the ceilings and inside walls. The interspaces, inside walls around technical installations, stairways and faces are of prefab elements.

Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, Portland, Oregon

Portland Center Residence Towers, Portland, Oregon/USA

(Pages 134–137)

Three residence-towers, erected on the outskirts of Portland, have contributed to the re-building of around 35,000 sq. meters. Two office buildings and a huge garage have been created at the same time. The residence-towers stand on two structures serving as a foundation, these buildings being subdivided into independent housing units.
The complex, however, had to be in keeping with the latest town-planning conceptions. Also, two landscape architects were called in. To the south of one of the residence-towers, an impressive fountain construction recalling the Trevi Fountain in Rome has been installed. The water splashes down refreshingly over an artificial rock formation, and it divides to form two pools. In one of the latter, the water is stirred up to resemble a bubbling spring. These landscape architects have accumulated a great deal of experience in this field. One of them collects photographs of waterfalls and cascades, the other has worked out a theory on this type of installation. They have known how to exploit the rhythmic possibilities of water in motion. The whole complex is framed by terraces and staircases. The residents living round about can relax here. The residence-towers have 24 and 22 floors on a A plan above a large ground floor. On the upper floors there are 4- and 5-room apartments. They are served by a system of corridors around the core. There is a small ante-room in front of the kitchen and the large living-room. The latter is followed, on the west or on the east, by a huge loggia. The dining area is situated in front of the kitchen, and is separated from the living-room by a folding door. A small corridor leads to the two or three bedrooms, with bath, WC and cloakroom.
Each floor contains eight apartments of from two to three and a half rooms.

Heinrich Schmitt and Gerd V. Heene, Ludwigshafen

Residence-towers on the Froschlache in Ludwigshafen

(Pages 138–141)

Site and plan
The municipal authorities had at their disposal a site measuring 45,000 sq. meters to the northwest of the Rhineland industrial centres. They wanted this splendid site to be reserved for residential purposes.
Four residence-towers of equal height and of equal area have been put up on this site. Each comprises a basement level and a ground floor with parking facilities for bicycles and prams, plus 21 residence floors. A top floor contains storerooms. Set at right angles to the highway, the four residence-towers enjoy seclusion and look out over the magnificent landscape of the Odenwald and the Haardt.
Each floor comprises a 1-room apartment, one of 2 rooms, two of 3 rooms and one 4-room apartment. In this way, social divisions are avoided. The specifications as to dimensions, based on tax assessment considerations, had to be scrupulously complied with.
The residence-towers are characterized by their rhomboid plan. This effect has been obtained by the decentralization of four rectangular parts in such a way that a central hall, displaced towards the sides, has been installed in the centre of each building. This is where we find the lifts and the fire escape, with egress onto the balconies on each floor.
It should be pointed out, nevertheless, that the lateral sides of the residence-towers remain at right angles to the long sides. The result is that the gable-ends are concave, contrasting with the convex faces on the other sides. This arrangement gives the complex its distinctive beauty.

Jean Serex, Morges/Switzerland

High-rise apartment houses of partially prefab elements, in Morges on Lake Geneva

(Pages 142–146)

We are presenting here the 1st unit of a new residential complex in Morges, on the shores of Lake Geneva. This unit is 11 floors high above ground-floor and entrance level. The latter is used solely as a public area, with lounges, lobbies, etc.
2 garages, situated between the 1st and the 2nd units, can accommodate 80 vehicles.
The residence tower contains 72 flats with 1, 2, 3, $3^1/_2$, $4^1/_2$ and 7 rooms. This distribution has permitted the architects to elaborate magnificent and very flexible plans. Only the balcony balustrades are pre-fabricated.
The lifts communicate directly with the garages.
This project marks the architects' effort to create an effect of total prefabrication, especially as regards the north face. The division slots show how the construction could have been carried out. In reality, the entire gable-end was concreted and poured in situ with "slots" incorporated in the facing.

Groeflin and Muralda, Basel

Terrace House in Binningen near Basel

(Pages 147–148)

Binningen, a commune on the outskirts of Basel, is experiencing a population growth parallel to that of the neighbouring city on the Rhine. At the bottom of the valley, 2 steep slopes are at the disposal of the town-planners. One of the slopes goes down toward the west. The houses situated there face the green valley. On the valley floor and on the east slope, it is planned to erect the Binningen cultural centre.
On the west, a number of houses are ear-marked for demolition in the near future. Elsewhere, on a similar site, we have built terrace houses. The soil, on this slope, was, owing to its geological composition, very difficult to handle, being almost impossible to dig. This was a supplementary reason inducing us to build houses on a terrace plan: on the basement level, there are the garages and, above, accessible from the sides and from an interior corridor, 4 $3^1/_2$-room apartments. Still higher up, on the 1st floor, we have the 4 housing units themselves, facing west.
On the slope side, the ground floor is reserved for cellars and utility rooms. On the first floor, there are the stairways leading to the apartments on 2 levels, as well as 2 children's rooms, facing east. On the 2nd floor, we have the upper parts of 8 $4^1/_2$-room apartments with the living room and dining nook on the west and the master bedrooms on the east.
The plans have been elaborated with great care. Each room ist accessible from the corridors, etc. The living rooms and dining rooms are particularly beautiful with their planted terraces. The interior finish is also executed with the utmost attention to detail. The floors are covered with wall-to-wall carpeting, the partitions with PVC facing, the ceilings with wood. The kitchens, the bathrooms and toilets are mechanically ventilated.
In conclusion, these apartments can compte with any kind of detached home from the point of view of livability and location.

Richard Neutra, Los Angeles
Egon Winkens
Contact-architect: Bruno Honegger, Zurich

Casa Ebelin Bucerius Brione s/Minusio, Switzerland

(Pages 157–162)

The site is located 600 meters above the Magadino Plain, on the mountain slope in the commune of Brione. Towards the west, there can be seen the upper part of Lago Maggiore with the towns of Ascona and Locarno and the Brissago Isles. Towards the south, the view includes the delta of the Ticino, Tamaro and Monte Ceneri. Towards the east, Bellinzona can be made out as well as the Italian mountains. It was necessary to build a private road 1 km long to get to the site.
On the ground floor, we have a living room with dining nook and library, the bedroom tract, bath, toilets, technical facilities and kitchen.
At garden level, there are 3 guest rooms, a large swimming pool opening both into the house and outdoors and a conservatory.
The top floor comprises a flat for the servants, a married couple, and an additional bedroom for another servant.
The garden level is situated half above grade level. The top floor covers $^1/_3$ of the ground floor.
The private driveway comes in behind the house, towards the west tract, where the garage is situated. The entrance is in the middle of the house, with a number of steps leading up to it. The first room to be entered is a big hall. This hall gives access to the living-room, which measures 45 sq. meters and which is entirely glazed on the south and east.
The kitchen comprises a dining-nook, which is used by the owner when he has no guests. From the entrance hall there is access, on the east, to the bedroom tract. A stairway likewise leads to the garden level, directly to the swimming pool. Half of the pool, which is located inside the house, can, in winter, be separated from the outside part by means of an concealed gate in the bottom. The garden level, in addition accomodates 3 guest rooms with 2 bathrooms, a large heating plant and cellar installations.
A stairway runs from the service tract up to the roof level, where the servants' quarters are located. The roof over the ground level is reserved for guests as a roof garden.
In a "rustico" there have been installed an emergency generator and an incinerator.

Observations
The house is brilliantly integrated in its natural surroundings. The interior of the house, with its large and small rooms, which are open and closed, clearly indicates that the owner and his family were subjected by Neutra to a minutious psychological analysis. There will be noted, nevertheless, a rather strange development in this most recent creation of the architect. On the exterior walls there are visible projecting beams, which serve no particular function.