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Summary

Martin Geiger, Zurich

Gaming-Simulation Thinkers, politicians and planners at the round table

(Pages 421–425)

There are already several cities which possess a "total plan". Unfortunately there are very few cities capable of realizing such a plan, that is, of knowing in advance whether it will benefit anyone and if so, whom, when and how.

Thus, such plans, whose consequences extend over decades, are often realized without having been previously subjected to careful examination, supervision and study. These steps are not taken, not because people are sure in advance that the plans are excellent but because it is imagined that it is impossible to verify their consequences prior to their realization.

This situation does not satisfy the ordinary citizen. That is why for some time now specialists have been working on methods which would permit the reproduction, on an experimental basis in a kind of laboratory, of the planners' proposals.

The "Gaming-Simulation" method developed during the Second World War in the USA for the army and then employed in business planning was adopted by the planners of cities after having been transformed radically. Therefore it seems that we now have a laboratory where we can conduct experiments in the planning field without involving a large population during the tests. Moreover, the results of these experiments are obtained in the minimum time.

The name of this "Gaming-Simulation" method contains the two concepts of "game" and "simulation", the latter designating exact representation. This means that reality is not only expressed graphically or formulated mathematically but, rather, simulated by living persons. New feature: in addition to rationally perceivable developments, account is also taken of the frequently irrational decisions made by society. That is why such planning models are among the most realistic and most comprehensive that can be imagined. They constitute veritable laboratories in which planners, governments, the private economic sector and the entire population will be able to verify the developments schemes for a city.

The author has elaborated a model that can be used by students of planning at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich.

Moirà & Moirà, Edinburgh

A new urban centre in Rutherglen

(Pages 426–428)

Rutherglen, which in 1126 was the first royal borough of Scotland, was, through the centuries, a commercial centre serving a vast region of the Clyde Valley. Local trading activities constantly increased in importance but were finally exceeded by the growth of the iron and coal industry, so that as a result the last market was held here, in Main Street, at the beginning of this century. This is the oldest part of the borough and nowadays accommodates an important shopping center, a residential area, an administrative district, an amusement area; it is, in other words, the core of the town. The rebuilding of this part of the town, influenced by the urban network envisaged for the city of Glasgow, will permit the transformation of Main Street into an all-pedestrian zone.

Higgins, Ney & Associates, London

Urban reorganization by means of the Hi-deck Housing System

(Pages 429–433)

In 1964 the Metropolitan Borough of Fulham asked the architects to put forward suggestions for a renovation in stages of Victorian residential districts in Fulham. Within the general framework of a planning study there was developed the conception of residential bridges for the reorganization of given sectors. This study was pursued by the London Borough of Hammersmith. The Reporton Road site was made available for the setting up of a residential bridge (Hi-deck) prototype. The residential density is 340 persons/ha. Each unit was to have a garage going with it. The construction program comprised 34 flats, an assembly hall, a laundry and a shop.

This planning scheme was supposed to eventuate in the construction of an apartment house with high residential density and in scale with the 19th century buildings surrounding it. That is why the terrace constructions have been limited to 4 stories. The flats are entered either at grade level or, in 2/3 of the cases, at pedestrian walk level. Since the latter is elevated, what we have is rather a street than a gallery or a passageway.

In the construction program it was necessary to take an important element into account, that is, the realization of a building type capable of integration in already existing building and at the same time ensuring high residential density. Moreover, this element ought to be adaptable to existing traffic systems during a transition period and also to permit the formation of a new system. The prototype project for Reporton Road meets the requirements of a building of this type. In the near future, this project will be developed with a view to its utilization on a much larger reconstruction site.

F. O. Hayes, London

North Peckham residential area, London

(Pages 434–437)

North Peckham is one sector of a large urban reorganization scheme. It has an area of 45 hectares and is situated in Southwark, a district of London. In the final stage this sector will accommodate 12,000 people.

In the plan presented it will be noticed that the residence blocks are arranged in such a way that they form courtyards. The blocks are connected at second-floor level by means of a pedestrian bridge. These bridges give access to maisonette flats above and below.

Shepherd & Epstein, London

Urban reorganization in Camden, London

(Pages 438–440)

In this urban reorganization zone located in the centre of Camden and covering an area of 3 ha, there have been constructed 309 housing units, 11 shops and 10 studios for artists as well as an exhibition hall. Moreover, there are 66 garages and parking sites. 145 flats are situated on two floors, the other are distributed over one single level. The residential density corresponds to that of London, i. e. 340 persons per ha.

Contrary to the other examples published in this Issue, which also are low-silhouette, high-density buildings, other guiding ideas determined the planning of this complex. The problem of incorporating small reorganization zones in the existing construction is hardly soluble by means of the Hi-deck system. On the other hand, the reconstruction of larger sectors is effected more harmoniously in a big district. The example

dealt with here solves the problem by maintaining the already existing streets. Street traffic and pedestrian movements are handled on the same level, but the number of points of contact is reduced by means of dead-end streets and streets reserved for pedestrians.

Lauritz Lauritzen, Bad Godesberg

Urban reorganization as a political and economic problem

(Pages 441–442)

Despite the considerable effort made in the field of new housing since the creation of the German Federal Republic, it must not be forgotten that many of our communities have not been able to adapt, in many sectors, to the rapid economic and social changes that have occurred during the last few decades. Every day we find out things about these structural developments in entities that no longer meet the requirements of our age. We are confronted, for example, by the problems of noise, air and water pollution, traffic-clogged streets, lack of parking space, shortage of adequate playgrounds for children; outmoded housing where flats lack light, air and sun.

In the future it will be necessary not only to remedy these defects, but it will be necessary to have a radically new conception of the city, a conception that is capable of adapting the city to changes in economic and social structures.

The basis of the new draft law is an expanded interpretation of the laws governing land holdings. On the one hand, it extends to the communities the chance to acquire more rapidly the sites needed for renewal and development, but, on the other hand, it works from the principle that private property should be treated with as much consideration as possible.

This draft law also provides for the maintenance of stable prices for the necessary sites in the zones in question.

It is clear that the reorganization of old unhealthy residential districts is a difficult and costly job.

J. M. Lamunière, Geneva

High-rise apartment houses in Lancy and Châtelaïne, Geneva

(Pages 443–447)

The Tours de Lancy (Lancy Towers) are constructed on the southeast ridge of an elevated plateau. These two high-rise apartment houses constitute the first stage of a district plan calling for five of them. In Châtelaïne we have six high-risers, two of which are now in use and two under construction. Here the ground is practically flat and surrounded by small-scale industry and housing of little importance.

In Lancy the available ground runs along the southeast ridge of the plateau and extends downwards as far as a road situated half-way down the side of a small wooded valley. A residential zone, the public park, the primary school and, farther back, the civic centre and commercial focus of Petit-Lancy bound it on the northwest.

The only apparently acceptable scheme doing justice to the specific exigencies of the site is on that unites minimum ground utilization and high residential density. These considerations inevitably led to the idea of high-risers.

In Châtelaïne an attempt is made to arrange the structures so as to create a spatial quality concentrating interest within the built-up area.

The organism of the Tours de Lancy or of Châtelaïne could be broken down into sectors illustrating the fundamental principle involved, from which derives the entire structural conception closely associated with it. Over the whole height there is a "rigid" vertical distribution

axis and on each floor a horizontal communication zone giving access to the flats which is likewise "rigid". Inside the flats there is a "semi-rigid" zone of service areas grouped in a concentric ring on the vertical axis as well as a zone of served areas grouped concentrically about service areas.

The structural supporting systems of Lancy and Châtelaïne, although differently concretized, stem from the same principle. The vertical structures define three concentric "rings". They serve two distinct functions: to transmit load stresses to the foundations and to mark off the vertical communication areas, service areas and served areas.

A third function, static in nature, is served by the first "ring" containing the vertical communication area.

In its present stage, the building of housing out of pre-fab concrete elements is no longer a pioneer achievement. Despite the boom in this method, it has still not found its distinctive mode of expression and remains a faithful translation of the traditional building procedure. However, the studies undertaken in connection with Lancy and Châtelaïne were bound to result in a type of expression peculiar to prefabrication and in an attempt to reduce or eliminate certain weaknesses inherent in the juxtaposition of elements. Thus the scheme adopted in Châtelaïne and that applied in Lancy differ from the currently applied pre-fab method, mainly by the absence of splitting up of structure in plan and section and by the willingness to do without any special angle-piece.

Claude Paillard, Zurich and Winterthur

The Municipal Theatre of St. Gall

(Pages 448–456)

The new Municipal Theatre of St. Gall is situated one hundred meters from the centre of the city, on a quiet drive in the middle of a park. This site has had a decisive influence on the plan. With this new theatre St. Gall now has a cultural centre comprising also a concert hall and an already existing fine arts museum.

The repertory of the theatre of St. Gall includes plays, operas, light operas and ballets. The spatial program is thus adapted to the dramatic program. In addition to the stage, the auditorium, lobbies and foyers, the new theatre accommodates a secondary stage, a lower stage, with automatic scene sequence, the staff cloakrooms, rehearsal rooms, a rehearsal stage (simultaneously used as an experimental theatre), prop rooms, furniture, etc., studios and administrative and service premises. The construction has a total volume of 55,000 cubic meters. The auditorium, included in this figure, contains only 4,500 cubic meters.

The total plan is based on a hexagon. This design principle stems from the auditorium, which spreads toward the rear. This fundamentally hexagonal conception in itself creates the proper "theatre" atmosphere. The same idea was applied to the external construction. The same feature emerges in the arrangement of the main rooms, especially the auditorium and the entire stage level and the storerooms sited on the upper level, 5 meters above the ground floor. Thanks to this arrangement, the park level of the building is kept free, particularly as regards the large rooms making up the foyer, separated only by the core of the lower stage and a number of supports. The third characteristic of this construction is its execution in visible concrete both outside and inside. There is no paint applied to this concrete.

Viewed from the outside, the new Municipal Theatre of St. Gall appears as large closed cubes, the auditorium and the stage structure, this being the centre of gravity around which are grouped the other wings.