

Summary

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Summary

Hermann Zinn, Brugg

More publicity for town-planning?

(Pages 349–354)

In present-day discussions dealing with town-planning, words like participation, information, public initiative, express the dissatisfaction of the masses who are only slightly informed of administrative and political decisions. The problem is to invest the town-planning process with a more public character, so that the general population is more involved in it. But which public are we talking about? Politicians, various interest groups, traditionally underprivileged groups or, again, the press? Which of these groups in fact demands greater dissemination of information? The usual approach in this matter is to point out the habitual indifference of the masses in the face of reforms launched precisely by privileged élites. The problem of democratising town-planning is both technical and social in nature, and it cannot be resolved except with the cooperation of a populace that is enlightened as to the problems involved and is fully aware of them. The different phases of a town-planning study: choice of variants, interpretation of the measures taken, realization, checking of results, are for the most part matters for the political authorities. The planner is confronted by innumerable obstacles: economic difficulties, the conservatism of public education, the lack of cultural development at the mass level and the political influence of pressure groups. It is necessary to be aware of this situation, but not to become resigned to it.

Certain solutions to the problem, such as the American system of advocacy planning, consist in the following: the planning people confront the authorities on behalf of the social groups concerned who are not in a position to defend their own cases. To be sure, numerous problems come up when this system is applied. The analogy with a court of law is limited; the state authority is not a single judge, and we may even question the honesty of the advocate. The main problem is to make the planning process more "transparent" for the public. Our practical experience is restricted to development plans for small communities in Switzerland, where the social structure and the political situation are still relatively favourable to positive planning.

Thamesmead: A program in process of realization

Greater London Council, Department of Architecture

(Pages 357–361)

Thamesmead, an enterprise of the Greater London Council, is one of the most interesting contemporary town-planning projects. "London builds better", declares Manfred Sack in the journal *Die Zeit* of August 7, 1970. This opinion has to be concurred with, and we must ask

why. Is it because speculation has been eliminated? Perhaps public participation and the information service were better organized than in our country. From the moment the first prototypes were developed, a film was presented to orient the public.

Of the complex of 17,000 units, on which work was begun in 1962, one quarter has now been completed. The guiding idea of the planners was: "Thamesmead ought not to become a dormitory city". An alternation of individual houses and more compact blocks aims to integrate together different social classes. A system of pedestrian paths has been elaborated with the same care as was devoted to the roadways connecting up with the centre of London.

The program envisages two artificial lakes supplemented by a network of canals. The main feature will be a marina surrounded by houses. The community centre, on several levels, will comprise shops, offices, administrative facilities, schools, etc., but also housing. Thamesmead therefore is not only a town-planning experience, but it contributes to making building more profitable. This justified the setting up of a prefabrication works capable of producing up to 1500 housing units per year.

"Lesná" residential unit near Brno in Czechoslovakia

(Pages 362–365)

Like all the socialist countries, Czechoslovakia is obliged to build housing for a rapidly growing population despite a lack of industrial resources. Although the complex presented here is one of the most elaborate in the country, it is to be feared that the whole will rapidly assume the character of a dormitory city.

The project, established on the basis of a quantitative study of needs, dates from 1959. It provides for the normed prefabrication of 6000 housing units, which upon completion of the project in 1970 will accommodate 20,000 residents. The flats are small, but correctly arranged. The installations provided for are all easily accessible on foot. An alternating composition of blocks of 5, 9 and 13 storeys, is repeated several times. The young planning team, the authors of this project, has realized the maximum from the architectural point of view, but it lacks the complementary enthusiasm to carry the operation through. Thus, communications with the old town have not yet been finished, which raises the problem of the integration of the new urban complex.

Nevertheless, this complex represents a step forward and merits thorough analysis for the benefit of future operations.

Karel Strejcek

The planning of the Olympic Village in Munich

Planning of complex, Heinle, Wischer and Associates, architects, Munich-Stuttgart in association with Ludwig, Wiegand and Zuleger

(Pages 366–371)

For the German Federal Republic, the Olympic Games of 1972 are an event of international importance. It is not only the cable constructions that are interesting but also the surroundings, e.g., the Olympic Village, whose town-planning significance is important for the future, for it combines more specialists than ever before in Germany.

The basic concept of the architects has been preserved, but the operation as a whole has been realized under the pressure of extremely brief deadlines along with numerous program alterations. The Olympic Village, secluded from traffic

noise, opens toward the green countryside to the southeast. Its centre, organized on two levels, is easily accessible via the Lerchenauer Straße underground railway, as well as via several express roadways. The total complex appears in the shape of a system of terrace houses with incorporated gardens, where the individual character is very much emphasized. The whole, nevertheless, harmonizes with the other Olympic installations, and, according to Prof. Mitscherlich, will inspire the residents of the village to intercommunicate.

Despite the extremely brief deadlines, the project when completed will be the greatest sports complex in Europe, which, after the Olympic Games, will be an important tourist attraction.

Planning of Berne-Brünnen: Example of real estate amalgamation

Berne-Brünnen planning group
Hans Reinhard, Berne

(Pages 372–375)

It is not yet possible to show good photos of the Berne-Brünnen complex (around 80 ha, west of Berne), but one important step has already been taken: the reallocation of real estate, the first example in Switzerland of this kind of operation. It has been possible to convince the numerous property owners that collective methods were the best way to arrive at a good solution of the problem. While the experience gained with Tscharnergut and Gäbelbach could be drawn on, the planners were able to profit by the inheritance laws of the Canton of Berne, which do not entail the subdivision of real estate. By way of a system of compensations and revaluations, justice was done to all property owners. All of them are participating in the operation; they are kept informed of the planning and of the actual construction.

The basis of the project consists of a number of studies on topography, climate, population, traffic, etc. With good connections with Berne, Brünnen ought to be able to participate in the activity of the city while remaining in the midst of a protected green zone. The social composition of the residents will be differentiated, and the necessary installations are provided for. The problem of the express road has been subjected to special study and discussion. 200 to 500 units will be built each year.

Hans Reinhard

Shinichi Okada, Tokyo

Two Japanese projects aiming at renovation and urban concentration by means of high-risers

(Pages 376–380)

It seems that Japanese town-planners do not have to concern themselves with the demands of pressure groups before beginning their planning work. Everything is sacrificed to motor traffic; even Kenzo Tange, who built the Tokyo Bay project, confirms this trend, which consists in utilizing an ever contracting urban space.

In the examples shown below, the city is made up of a metabolic and flexible structure which encompasses everything that is transformed, i.e., traffic, installations, etc. and of a conservative infrastructure. The two domains are connected by a vertical transfer zone. In the ITA plans intended for the renovation of the Itabashi district in Tokyo as well as the OBT for Osaka, there is proposed an axial traffic artery bounded by high-density buildings, but these fade out toward the periphery where the residential quarters are located, along with the green zones and the open countryside.

Underneath the axial roadway are concentrated all the business premises, services, parking facilities, etc. In the foundation zone, farther down, there are pedestrian services, such as shops, auditoriums, etc.

In the OBT plan, each of the parts can be realized in stages. The residents are protected from the inconveniences of urban life while the street, characteristic of the OBT plan, becomes attractive again to motorists owing to a very complete system of drive-in installations.

Peter Rudolph, Berlin

Spatial cable-and-rod structures

(Pages 381–388)

The author of the projects presented here has suffered a great deal of criticism at the hands of specialists who did not believe in the possibility of realizing structures of this kind. Rudolph has been able to prove his detractors wrong, and this shows that architects ought to attach more importance, in their studies of new urban construction methods, to the structural aspect, in the interests of increased profitability.

The problem here was to develop structures whose additive properties would permit the use of all available space and the realization of all possible kinds of space skins. These studies led to mesh structures made up of tensed cables and extensor rods making possible all kinds of wide-span structural forms. In these structures, the forces involved are in general stresses that are distributed along the cable axes and carried towards the foundations via masts or compression rods. The following types can be distinguished:

- radial structures with axial masts and radiating cables anchored in the ground or attached to a peripheral compression ring. These structures can carry intermediate floors; it is possible to combine them vertically and horizontally and even to create suspended volumes.
- structures with multiple and dispersed rods. These can produce radial or ring shapes, as well as domes.
- rectangular meshes: these structures are more elaborate and made up of elementary systems that interpenetrate in two perpendicular directions. These structures can be stacked in order to form storeyed buildings. These meshes permit the creation of floors or decks capable of bridging wide spans.

All these structural designs are in line with modern demands for large flexible volumes free of supports. The rectangular meshes are suited to urban spatial structures, being capable of all kinds of growth and transformation. They permit, the installation of the most widely varying volumes and even embrace traffic routes. It is possible to create inside the meshed space large support-free reserves.

The static studies on these systems are carried out on models, on which it is possible to verify the correctness of the geometric shapes, to measure the tension on the cables, to study the incidences due to the pre-tension of the structure and to see the deformations of the mesh in terms of the loads it supports.