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Summary

On this Issue

This Issue is devoted to housing and to the problems bound up with it, problems that face us every day whether we like it or not. This field will be attended by even more difficulties in the future.

There is no point in trying to gloss over the contradiction that prevails here. On the one hand, we have the architect, who is supposed to design good housing (that is to say, at moderate cost), along with clients who demand this; on the other hand, we have the actual occupants, who for the most part, under the pressure of the housing crisis, are supposed to declare themselves perfectly satisfied with what they get.

Recently, however, in the form of public demonstrations, some of those concerned are beginning to demand more of a voice in the decision-making behind town-planning and housing projects. This is why certain public planning agencies as well as a number of private promoters have, cautiously, got to the point of heeding the wishes of occupants, even if they have no intention of meeting them.

The future will show to what extent there is any inclination to allow concrete public participation in the planning process or whether merely the worst complaints will be dealt with, but the complaints are increasing.

One thing is clear as of now, and that is that participation cannot be limited simply to the process of building but will eventually embrace even wider fields.

Erwin Mühlstein

"Seeselacker" housing complex in Basel

Walter Wurster, Basel
Engineer: Emch + Berger
Landscape architect: Wolf Hunziker

(Pages 86-89)

Since the municipal building code of Basel permits only detached or semi-detached houses of two floors on this site measuring 50 000 square meters, the last site that is still open on the "Bruderholz", it was necessary to obtain a special authorization from the authorities. In any case, the skyline formed by the surrounding structures was not disturbed. The final project comprises 8-storey high-risers and 2-storey low-silhouette volumes. This project was accepted by the authorities on October 12, 1966. The site utilization coefficient is 0.45.

The complex is made up of units of varying sizes distributed throughout the high-risers and the low buildings; there are also workshops, a group of shops, an indoor swimming-pool and a kindergarten.

Two access roads with turn-arounds concentrate traffic, and the complex is crisscrossed by pedestrian paths. Each residential unit is furnished with its own parking space in one of the underground garages. The complex is laid out on the basis of a fundamental module, which allows for the employment of standardized building elements. The most profitable solution turned out to be a solid construction poured in situ with partly prefabricated elevations.

Begun in 1967, the complex was completed in 1971.

Cost of construction per cubic meter: Fr. 185.- plus 8%.

"Memel" residential complex for technicians, at Mexinieu near Lyons

Gabriel Roch, Lyon

(Pages 79-81)

This complex is designed for the technicians employed in the atomic energy plant recently built in the vicinity of Bugey between Geneva and Lyons. Later on, management staff and engineers will also reside here. We are presenting here the first stage of the project, that intended for the technicians.

The complex is located on a hill and constitutes a contrast with the medieval town of Pérouges near-by, but in any case it harmonizes architecturally with the latter. Motor-cars do not have access to it and are to be parked at the foot of the hill. The planning is based on a preliminary theoretical studies and on a systematic modular grid that covers the entire site.

The system of rigid assembly of orthogonal volumes has been abandoned,

and the complex is made up of similar polygons, which, as applied in practice, results in a free interplay of repeated shapes. Although it is adapted to the needs of the occupants, this type of architecture can be considered to be organic, and the grouping of the elements is satisfactory from the town-planning standpoint.

As for the actual construction, again great freedoms were taken, the effect at times being rather abrupt, but there is never any real lack of harmony with the surrounding landscape. Thanks to the functional character of the complex, which is stressed both outside and inside, it is highly livable.

Operation Gjellerup A new city in the Brabrand in Denmark

Knud Blach Petersen, Mogens Harbo und Erich Weitling, Brabrand

(Pages 59-65)

On a site with an area of around 1 million square meters it is easy to visualize many different kinds of building project that are satisfactory both from the economic and the technical points of view, but none of them will be keeping with the new conceptions and theories of regional planning. If, in a housing scheme, high quality is the desideratum, we immediately come up against a basic difficulty. In point of fact, in a correctly designed housing unit, quality is spelled out in terms of quantity. A sufficiently large outside terrace area, for example, is translated into a given quantum. The entire project ought to be kept within reasonable cost limits so as to remain within the reach of moderate-income occupants. This problem appears to have been solved at Gjellerup.

And this applies to surface areas, traffic movements, child safety, profitability, etc. The 8 types of housing unit built here are of maximum dimensions and highly standardized. The 6000 units envisaged will be completed toward 1975. The first stage, comprising 1776 flats, will be completed in 1972. The units are distributed in 16 4-storey buildings and in 7 elongated ones situated to the north and east of the site and in 8-storey buildings with 5 entrances and lifts located toward the north side of the terrain.

A linear promenade cum park protected by a continuous parapet serves as a play area for children, and as a strolling area for adults. The largest type of flat has two bathrooms, with an area of 129 m² and a balcony measuring 8 m². Despite the comfortable dimensions, rentals are reasonable.

There are numerous community facilities; they comprise a very complete sports centre, 4 kindergartens, 2 day nurseries in planning stage. The focus of

this centre will be a young people's club house containing a discothèque, club rooms, etc. There will also be a large shopping centre on the other side of the access road. The two centres will be connected by means of a pedestrian bridge. 1400 to 1500 parking sites complete the picture.

The cultural and recreation centre is composed of 4 buildings surrounding a small square. They accommodate a wide range of recreational facilities for young people, assembly halls, theatres and ballrooms. Part of the installations are under the management of the municipality, the rest, especially a cafeteria, being run by a private company. There are also available collective residential facilities for young people, a hotel, a residence for the aged and a parish centre.

The differentiated structure of these installations is such that all segments of the population can feel at ease here and all facilities are in continuous use all through the day and during the evenings. The shopping centre is made up of buildings having a depth of 6 to 9 meters for small shops. The department store and the supermarket are located in buildings of greater depth. Here there are also office premises and various other facilities. The arrangement of covered pathways and the heating and air-conditioning installations guarantee comfort regardless of weather and season. All the structures are prefabricated, which guarantees a high degree of flexibility in the lay-out of the different premises. Some of the shops can be extended vertically to form 2-storey sales premises. The centre is to be opened early in 1972 at the latest.