

Summary

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que les architectes ne surent pas définir les priorités de leurs efforts en construction. Leurs préférences et tendances personnelles influencèrent la politique générale de planification et les détails architecturaux d'une manière catastrophique.

Les principales erreurs commises par les architectes britanniques pendant les années de 1945 à 1965 se résument ainsi:

On n'a pas su reconnaître que le vrai client est un amalgame de tous ceux qui sont influencés d'une façon ou d'une autre par l'activité de l'architecte.

On fut incapable de remarquer que les doutes du rôle du client devraient entraîner une incertitude calculée en tant qu'élément intégral de la méthode de travail.

Il est notoire qu'on maintient, en Grande-Bretagne, la formation de l'architecte au stade de l'amateurisme. L'exigence de l'industrie en vue d'obtenir une technologie particulière a pour résultat que les architectes demeurent une profession de colporteurs spirituels qui attendent les restes des autres technologues.

Les deux années qui se sont écoulées depuis 1965 n'ont apporté aucune modification à cette situation.

Cedric Price, Londres

Pour un joujou de résidence économique de 24 heures

(Pages 476-477)

A notre époque, la population éprouve un besoin de plus en plus impérieux d'espace vital surtout en ce qui concerne l'appartement. Ainsi, dans une habitation, le désir de disposer d'une superficie peu délimitée est de plus en plus répandu. Ne nos jours, les chambres sont surtout appréciées comme objets d'équipement de sorte que la disposition concentrée des aménagements de l'appartement semble devenir un facteur toujours plus important du plan, facteur qui nécessite une disposition radicale des locaux avec une liaison directe avec le noyau. Mais chaque agrandissement d'un local augmente automatiquement la distance qui le sépare de ce noyau.

Grâce à la décentralisation des services, à la miniaturisation et à la mobilité de l'équipement, l'édification de locaux offrant une liberté maximale d'utilisation devient, dans les projets, un critère de plus en plus important. Dans tous les cas où les habitants d'un appartement éprouvent le désir de changer de logement pour des raisons personnelles ou de situation, le rôle de l'appartement comme étant une boîte habitable qui s'adapte pendant une longue durée sera moins significatif que celui d'un «jeu d'habitation» économique travaillant pendant un cycle de 24 heures.

Ces constatations sont la base de tous les appartements présentés. Tous les plans sont prévus pour un couple de parents, 2 enfants et encore un adulte. Les maisons d'habitation elles-mêmes sont édifiées en éléments circulaires en tôle d'acier. Elles sont prévues pour recevoir encore un autre élément (max. 2 étages).

Principales caractéristiques des plans:

1. Zones avec utilisation variée pendant 24 heures.
2. Installations de nettoyage décentralisées.
3. Accès multiples extérieurs et intérieurs à certaines zones pendant le cycle de 24 heures.
4. Possibilité de diviser la maison pendant certaines périodes.
5. Grande capacité de dépôt.
6. Local prévu pour les activités de formation ultérieure de l'habitant.
7. Possibilité de diviser à tout moment en 2 appartements grâce à des unités et accès indépendants.
8. Adaptation acoustique renforcée grâce à une isolation des zones calmes.
9. Échange et possibilité d'améliorer les installations de nettoyage et celles de la cuisine.

Farrell et Grimshaw, Londres

Tour de salles de bain en acier et en plastique à Paddington

(Pages 478-479)

Deux jeunes architectes eurent le courage d'utiliser des éléments pré-

fabriqués en plastique pour la construction d'un objet isolé.

A part les avantages techniques et physiques indéniables de cette solution le devis estimatif prouva l'économie du résultat. Une partie de la tâche de construction comprenant la transformation de six maisons d'habitation de style victorien en une maison d'habitation pour étudiants, fut l'érection d'une tour de salles de bain. Cette tour est située dans une arrière-cour étroite et elle est composée des parties suivantes: Le noyau-porteur consiste en six états en double T situés dans les angles d'un hexagone et qui ont été renforcés par du treillis. Des bras en porte-à-faux et en forme de rayons portent, aux angles, les unités des salles de bain et la rampe vitrée en profil qui se déroule en spirale.

Caractéristiques de la solution

De la disposition de la tour dans l'arrière-cour, il résulte un gain considérable de place dans le bâtiment principal ce qui permet d'abriter 25 étudiants de plus. En outre, la dimension des travaux de transformation s'en trouve réduite. C'est pourquoi, il ne fut pas nécessaire d'envisager des travaux d'installations dans les bâtiments qui ont plus de 100 ans.

La conception du plan et de l'appareil porteur fut déterminée par la raison suivante: Le mur de la cour étroite n'était éloigné que de 60 cm de la paroi extérieure de la tour à cet endroit-là ce qui exigeait un plan extrêmement compact.

L'appareil porteur

La charpente en acier de 25 m de hauteur a été préfabriquée en 11 parties et montée sur place. L'appareil porteur semblable à une grille a été placé dans une figure de plan hexagonale d'un diamètre de 183 cm. Il consiste en états en double T reliés par des cornières. La rampe en tôle d'acier a également été préfabriquée et montée sur le chantier.

Unités de salles de bain

Dans l'ensemble, on a installé 42 unités dont 12 consistent en une cellule de douche et de lavage avec WC annexes. 18 cellules contiennent des baignoires, des WC et des lavabos. Les unités des salles de bain sont composées de 2 parties faites dans un matériel de plastique armé de fibres de verre. Elles ont été montées sur place. L'unité complète pèse environ 110 kg de sorte qu'elles peuvent être déplacées par seulement trois ou quatre monteuses.

Noyau de service

En face de chaque point de raccordement avec l'ancien bâtiment, l'unité de bain a été remplacée par une unité de service ouverte vers la rampe et qui abrite des machines de lavage, de séchage et des appareils à café. Toutes les conduites ont été installées dans ce noyau. Un réservoir d'eau, fabriqué également en plastique renforcé de fibres de verre, a été fixé au-dessus du noyau de service.

Groupe Archigram, Londres

Control-and-Choice-living

(Pages 480-482)

Ce projet présenté à la Biennale est un développement ultérieur d'idées exprimées dans des projets précédents (voir Construction+Habitation 5/67). Dans ce projet, on s'est donné pour tâche principale de rechercher des systèmes, dispositions et techniques qui participent à l'émancipation et au bien-être général de l'individu. Les dessins et maquettes illustrent un appartement familial typique situé dans une région à haute densité de population.

Dans ce projet, l'appartement est prévu comme étant formé d'une quantité d'éléments qui se transforment continuellement et qui sont toutefois à chaque instant complets. La version présentée correspond à un état imaginé dans une dizaine d'années mais la plus grande partie des composants utilisés figureraient également dans un état qui se présenterait dans une année.

Dans cette étude on relève le paradoxe existant entre la liberté du choix et le contrôle, notamment quand il s'agit d'un concours d'événements et de critères qui n'ont pas encore été analysés selon la façon traditionnelle.

Summary

Jürgen Joedicke

British architecture viewed from the Continent

(Pages 447-449)

Cultural relations between Great Britain and the Continent develop in different phases: periods of influence are succeeded by periods of isolationism. At the present time, English architects, thanks to their planning projects, constructions and theories, are exerting a tremendous influence on their Continental colleagues. On the other hand, the period extending from the beginning of the century up to the Second World War was characterized by a conservative conception of architecture in Great Britain, with new movements coming from the Central European countries.

Nevertheless, the European architects of this period were well aware that their ideas and their designs were based on knowledge acquired in Great Britain in the second half of the 19th century. It can be said without any hesitation that the promoters of modern architecture were British, and it can also be added that Great Britain did not know how to develop the findings made in this field, the result being that modern architecture developed on the Continent and there made its greatest advances, in the Twenties.

To support the contention that the beginnings of modern architecture are to be found in Great Britain, we need only adduce the name of William Morris and the Art and Craft movement. Over and above this movement, mainly concerned with the reform of ethical and moral values, modern architecture owes its technical development in great part to what was done, in this sector, in Great Britain first of all. The Industrial Revolution, which goes back to the end of the 18th century, ushered in a new epoch. Finally, mention can be made here of the remarkable work done by English engineers and architects, who for the first time in history employed wrought iron and steel in buildings and whose plans for bridges, factories, railway stations and exhibition halls were revolutionary.

When we bear all this in mind, it is difficult to understand how English architecture could become so dormant after 1900, the slack period extending into the Thirties.

It was at this time that a number of English architects endeavoured to join up with Continental developments. In 1931 there is founded the MARS group, the British branch of the CIAM, which organizes a great in London in 1938. In 1933, the group Unit One sees the light of day. Its members are: the architects C. Lucas and W. Coates, the sculptors H. More and B. Hepworth as well as the painter B. Nicholson. Their idea is to improve the situation of the modern artist in public life.

It is, above all, English school building construction that has had such a remarkable influence on developments on the Continent of Europe. Since the end of the war, there have been created 4.5 million new places for school pupils. This growth was possible owing to systematic and minuted planning work. Today modern architecture enjoys considerable popularity in the British public. Thus, the United Kingdom offers to the Continental European observer a surprising spectacle: the spectacle of a very lively architectural development seeking to resolve current problems and also to explore utopian possibilities for the future.

Andrew Renton and Associates, London

Saint Katherine Dock House in London for the London Port Authorities

(Pages 450-453)

The most remarkable thing about this project is the endeavour made to adapt the structure to the environment and to put up a building which harmonizes as well as possible with the setting. We are publishing this article mainly because we have here an intentional combination of traditional elements with modern design

with a view to obtaining results that are architecturally progressive.

The vicinity of the Tower of London, of Tower Bridge, of the Royal Mint and of the famous warehouses of Thomas Telford dating to the year 1882 called for a disciplined realization of the aesthetic and technical means available to arrive at a result that is complex and typical of our age, the structure being the building housing the London Port Authorities, the accounting offices, the computation centre, a headquarters for the harbour police, a canteen, club facilities and all necessary utility premises.

The building replaces, on the same site, an office building which was destroyed during the last war. With the adjoining warehouses the building surrounds a basin on the northbank of the Thames, Saint Katherine Dock. The rectangular structure, comprising four stories, rests on props and harmonizes in height and in volume with the neighbouring buildings.

In conclusion, here is what the architect has to say: "The aim was to conceive of a building possessing power and dignity by using heavy rough materials, but in keeping with the already existing buildings in the harbour area."

Architects:

Hubert Bennett / Greater London Council

Jack Whittle (formerly F. G. West)

Geoffrey Horsfall, W. J. Appleton

E. J. Blyth, N. Engleback

Engineers: P. Dunican, Hugh Creighton

Engineering consultants: Ove Arup and Associates

Acoustics: P. H. Parkin

Concert hall on the South Bank in London

(Pages 454-460)

Construction period: 1960-67

At the time of the planning of the Royal Festival Hall in 1948, there had been envisaged the erection of a small concert hall facing Belvedere Road. However, the time available before the opening of the Festival of Britain in 1951 did not permit the carrying out of the original project. Between Waterloo Bridge and the Royal Festival Hall there was a free space on which the new building has been put up.

The main auditorium, Queen Elizabeth Hall, has a maximum seating capacity of 1106. It was planned as a concert auditorium. It also has installations permitting other uses. For example, it has projection apparatus with a big screen. Moreover, the hall is equipped with loudspeaker for conferences and simultaneous translation equipment. The hall is also completely equipped for television broadcasting.

Purcell Hall has a seating capacity of 372. It is furnished with a stage designed for chamber music concerts. The acoustic installations are identical with those of Queen Elizabeth Hall.

In the zone situated behind the stage, i.e., between the orchestra pit of Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Hall, there is an intermediate level accommodating the administration offices, the inspectors and sales premises for programmes. An underground tunnel connects this tract with the Royal Festival Hall. Every part of the complex can be reached without crossing public zones.

Queen Elizabeth Hall is of site-poured concrete. What is involved here is a coffer of reinforced concrete supported on large-diameter concreted cylinder foundations. The partitions of the hall are supporting elements. The roof of the auditorium consists of a reinforced concrete deck 38 cm thick. Purcell Hall is likewise a reinforced concrete coffer construction. Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Hall rest on the same foundations.

The two halls are entirely air-conditioned. The acoustics of the auditorium meets the most exacting requirements.

Nikolaus Pevsner, London

Ten years of building in England (1924-1934)

(Pages 461-463)

When I left Germany in 1933 to settle in England, I found British architecture very reactionary in outlook. However,

I was soon to realize that England was not the only country in this situation. Aside from the Central European countries, the other parts of the world were not at all progressive. In America architecture only gets moving toward 1927 with Neutra's Lovell house in Los Angeles and the Philadelphia Savings Fund building by Howe & Lescazes in 1932.

Architectural literature in England was almost exclusively limited to the journal "The Architectural Review". This monthly, established in 1896, began to take up the theme of modern architecture in 1923-24. In 1927 the architect Friedrich Etchells translated Le Corbusier's article entitled "Vers une architecture" ("Towards an architecture"), and in 1928 another article by Le Corbusier was published.

Another influence still stronger than that of Le Corbusier came from France with Mallet-Stevens. At the International Exposition of 1925 in Paris, attention was devoted to these new architectural idioms. In 1930, Le Corbusier drew up the plan for an exhibition hall for the Vensta enterprise. At that time, in Great Britain, Dutch expressionism was mingled with Finnish or Russian architecture: there did not yet exist any typical modern English architectural style.

Le Corbusier's disciples in England were Connell, Ward and Lucas, who established a firm. The advances made in Concrete construction were quite remarkable at that time. Sir Owen Williams' factory at Beeston, erected in 1931-32, figures among the best reinforced concrete structures of the Thirties in Europe. The best known architects in the years between 1934 and 1939 are Reginald Yorke, Maxwell Fry and Frederick Gibberd.

When we seek to recapitulate the developments in architecture during those ten years, which were so decisive for Europe, we are compelled to admit that only 2 or 3 English buildings deserve special mention. However, we have witnessed considerable progress since the end of the Second World War.

Thomas Stevens, London

Observations on contemporary British architecture

(Pages 464-466)

In considering modern architecture in Great Britain, the beginnings of which date from around the Thirties, it is necessary at the outset to recall that the program of the architectural revolution was, for the most part, realized by men who had made a precise division between the revolutionary social utopia and the artistic avantgarde of the commencement of this century. These conceptions were to be introduced in a country where neither utopian thinking nor the avant-garde had had any sort of basis since the year 1688.

Following the political events of the Thirties in Continental Europe, a number of well-known architects emigrated to England and settled there permanently. The influence exerted by them on British architects was considerable. For British architecture, the general consequences of the war and of the policies of the Labour Government, which came into power, entailed the end of all private building projects, projects which were fairly important during a 12-year period, from 1939 to 1951.

At the present time, architectural training is a very important field of activity, in the opinion of both the central government and the local authorities. In this sector, the London County Council (the LCC having now become The Greater London County Council, or GLC), i.e., the municipal government of London, was a real pioneer. It represents a major power in the city by the fact, above all, that its annual expenses amount to some hundreds of millions of pounds Sterling.

When Berthold Lubetkin arrived in England, from France, in the Thirties, he gathered around him a group known by the name "Tecton", which was influential until 1960. Among the constructions in which young Tecton architects or Lubetkin had a share, there can be mentioned the Royal Festival Hall, the Royal College of Physicians and all the other Lasdun buildings.

Contractors: Runcorn Development Corporation

Architects: F. Lloyd Roche, David Gosling, Peter Edwards, Keith Smith, Surya Pawar, John Lovibond, John Randle, Ramish Hadap
Architectural consultants: Arthur Ling & Associates

Town Centre of Runcorn, Cheshire

(Pages 469-472)

Construction time: 1st phase 1968-72

The centre of the town is envisaged as a connecting element between an already existing old town and "a new town" containing 70,000 inhabitants. The area to be built on measures 45 hectares, including 30 hectares devoted to residential purposes. This site is located in a level valley which, on 3 sides, ascends to a height of 12 meters. On the north, there is a highway and, on the east, a park. The building program comprises shops, business offices and official premises, banks, a town hall, a medical centre, a theatre, a cinema, a restaurant, two hotels, a youth centre, a community hall, a concert hall, a museum, exhibition galleries, etc.

In a technical report of the Runcorn Development Corporation, it is stated that the general plan already contained the general leading ideas which subsequently became the principles underlying the project.

Hubert Bennett, Greater London Council

Housing project on the Themse

(Pages 473-474)

The first phase of the project, realization of which is already under way, will comprise, after 5 years, 4000 flats. The level site is located on the Thames Estuary. Since the level of the site is below water line at high tide, a continuously operating drainage system is to be installed. Only restricted use can be made of the ground-floor.

The first stage of the 1st phase comprises:

- 50 flats for 1 person (for the aged)
- 65 flats for 2 persons (for the aged)
- 288 flats for 2 persons
- 296 flats for 3 persons
- 416 flats for 4 persons
- 335 flats for 5 persons
- 44 flats for 6 persons.

Total number of flats: 1494. Number of residents: 5,245. Residential density: 240 residents/hectare and 70 flats/hectare.

There has been planned construction comprising 13-storey houses for the rented flats, 2- to 5-storey maisonette blocks and a series of 3-storey houses. The flats are in principle situated on the upper floors, the ground-floor being reserved for passageways, garages, etc.

Cedric Price, London

U.K. 1945-1965

(Page 475)

The weak point in architecture and town-planning in the U.K. in the period from 1945 to 1965 is the professional quality of the architects influential in setting up the priorities. The results have been largely disastrous.

The fault lies fundamentally in the education of these architects. Before the war, the architect's main responsibility was assumed to be that to his client, an individual or company paying for the job and occupying the final building.

This emphasis ignored two main conditions: 1) the change in the architect-client relationship and 2) the post-war demand for houses by both public and State with little consideration for their long-term validity.

This entailed the application of social, political and emotional beliefs of the designers to their work in a rather childishly direct way, the actual user of the housing being regarded as the "real" client and not the anonymous authority commissioning the given job. However, the masses of users were equally anonymous and impersonal, and so the architects ended up by being amateur sociologists planning the new equalitarian society.

Because of confusion on these points,

architects have failed to realize the contribution they should make to society. Their main concern is to provide a socially acceptable commodity—whether a city or a house.

The major faults of the profession in the U.K. from 1945 to 1965 can be summarized as follows:

Unawareness that the real "client" is a combination of all who are in any way affected by the architect's actions. Inability to accept that doubts on the part of "client" should introduce calculated uncertainty as an integral part of the designer's aesthetic and work method.

These faults have led to the following incorrect actions by the profession during this period:

The creation of new towns as finite entities.

The continuous production of housing under the assumption that family interrelationships will never change and that there will always be a housing shortage.

Continued use of only the present existing construction industry.

The assumption that existing community activities are fixed for all time.

Complete inability to grasp the facts of personal mobility and exchange.

Uncritical enthusiasm to accept opinions of other professions, doctors, economists, etc., the result being inflexible, old-fashioned plans.

Total avoidance of nation-wide planning.

The use of stock phrases, such as "urban renewal", "suburban sprawl", "green belt", etc. reveals inability to see that all landscape is one common amenity, subjects to common planning.

Unwillingness to demand any special technology of industry, with architects being left to take whatever they can pick up of other technologies.

Lack of concern for architectural education, that in the U.K. being the most amateurish of all systems of professional training.

1965 is two long years ago and nothing has changed.

Cedric Price, London

Towards a 24-hour economic living-toy

(Pages 476-477)

At the present time, people are experiencing an ever more pressing need for vital space, especially as regards living accommodation. Thus, in a flat, people increasingly want more room. Nowadays rooms are regarded mainly from the standpoint of technical equipment, so that concentrated lay-outs are becoming increasingly important in plans, this necessitating an arrangement whereby there is direct contact with the core structure of the building. However, every enlargement of a unit automatically increases the distance separating it from this core.

Thanks to decentralization of technical installations, reduction of scale and mobility in equipment, the building of units offering maximum utilization is becoming, in plans, a criterion of mounting importance.

In all cases where the occupants of a flat wish to change quarters for personal reasons or because of a job change, the function of the flat as an inhabitable box in which long-term alterations are made will be less important than the notion of an economic "living-toy" operating on a 24-hour cycle.

These considerations form the basis of all the flats presented here. All the plans envisage a married couple, 2 children and one additional adult. The houses themselves are constructed of circular sheet-metal elements. They are so designed as to be capable of taking an additional element (maximum 2 floors).

Farrell and Grimshaw, London

Steel and plastic high-rise sanitary structure in Paddington

(Pages 478-479)

This boldly conceived structure is of pre-fabricated plastic elements. It is a bath tower structure constituting part of a project converting six Victorian houses into a student residence. The supporting core consists of six reinforced double-T supports set in the angles of a hexagon. The bath-

room units are disposed on a radial pattern about a spiral Profilit-glazed ramp. The tower is sited in a backyard.

Main design features:

- The backyard location entailed space saving on the main site and made possible the accommodation of 25 additional students. And no important technical installations have had to be incorporated in the over-100-year-old buildings.

- The very restricted space available required an extremely compact plan.

- The spiral arrangement has made possible a balanced distribution of bathing facilities for all floors and offers more facilities than if the baths had had to be installed in each individual floor.

- A conventional supporting structure would have demanded more floor area; furthermore, such a spiral structure is difficult to carry out in concrete or masonry.

Supporting structure:

The tower has a 25-meter-high steel framework skeleton, pre-fabricated in 11 parts and assembled in situ. This skeleton is inscribed within a hexagonal plan with a diameter of 183 cm., and consists of double-T supports tied together with angle-irons. The radial projecting girders are connected by subsidiary beams so that there is created a series of concentric hexagons, on which the bath units rest. Each unit is situated one step higher than the one below.

The sheet-metal ramp was built and assembled in the same way.

Only bathing facilities are contained in this tower, which is connected to the main building by gangways, the ramp serving also as an emergency exit, and so the authorities did not prescribe any fire-proofing measures.

Bathroom units:

A total of 42 units was installed, 12 consisting of shower-and-lavatory cell with adjoining toilet, 18 containing bath-tubs, toilet and lavatories.

The bathroom units were pre-fabricated in two halves of fibreglass-reinforced plastic and assembled in situ, the two halves being bolted together and caulked. The wash-bowls are added as independent elements. Floors and tub supports are reinforced with composition boarding. The complete unit weighs around 110 kg., so that it can be set up by 3 or 4 workmen.

Service core:

Opposite each union point connecting with the old building, one bath unit was replaced by a service unit, with drying facilities, coffee machine, etc. All ducts were installed in the core. Only the ventilation pipes for the hot-air heating system are located at the unions with the old building. The hot air blows into the bathroom units via vents, and is exhausted into the core. Waste-water evacuation is effected via 3 drains.

A glassfibre-reinforced plastic water tank is installed on top of the service core.

Archigram Group, London

Control-and-Choice-living

(Pages 480-482)

This project, presented at the Biennale, is a further development of ideas expressed in preceding projects (cf. Building+Home 5/67). In this undertaking, the main assignment was to explore systems, set-ups and techniques designed to liberate and to contribute to the material welfare of the individual.

The drawings and models illustrate a typical family flat situated in a region of high density population.

In this project, the unit is envisaged as being composed of a number of elements capable of continuous transformation and yet complete at any given time. The version presented corresponds to a state of affairs imagined as existing within a decade, but the majority of the components utilized would likewise appear in a situation possibly obtaining within one year.

In this study, attention is drawn to the paradox existing liberty of choice and control, in particular when there is involved a concurrence of events and criteria which have not yet been analyzed according to the traditional fashion.