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Summary

On this Issue

Norbert Schmidt-Relenberg in his Introduction entitled "The Sociological Basis for the Planning of Homes for the Aged" presents the sociologist's approach to this problem.

The examples presented in this Issue show different aspects of building for the aged.

A special type of home for the aged is shown in the case of the home for the blind at Ecublens by Pierre Quillet; this complex in all details is geared to the particular needs of blind people.

As a supplement to the general theme of this Issue, we present the maternity school and kindergarten teachers' training college in Karlsruhe by the architect Erich Rossmann.

Friedrich Wilhelm Kraemer's article is devoted to an investigation of types of plans for student residences.

We begin in this Issue a regular column entitled "Interior Decorating, Furniture and Design"; this month Verena Huber discusses the theme "Guide-lines for Homes for the Aged".

Our special feature this time is the Dramatic Theatre in Düsseldorf by Bernhard Pfau, a project that is novel in the field of theatre construction owing to its original sculptural shape.

The Design Sheets, which will also appear regularly from this Issue on, comprise this time plans and details of the Düsseldorf Dramatic Theatre.

The contribution on construction research is concerned with the highly important problem of the "Qualitative assessment of building components".

Rupert Falkner, Vienna

For better housing for the aged

(Pages 153–156)

Extract from "Der Aufbau", Vol. 6, 1969, Vienna. Types of housing for the aged. The old type of "barracks" for the aged is now outmoded. The types of housing which are adapted to the degree of mobility and health of their users are as follows:

1. small independent flats
2. homes for the aged
3. flats for the aged
4. nursing homes
5. residences for the aged.

Each of these types ought not only to be adapted to the physical needs of the occupants, but also to respect their psychological requirements, i.e., to guarantee them at the same time a high degree of independence and the possibility of social contacts. This will have an influence on the conception and the dimensions of the units, the size and the shape of their arrangements, as well as their integration in and relation to the given neighbourhood, the city and the total metropolitan area.

Fritz Reist, Spiez

Home for the aged, "Niedersimmental", Spiez

(Page 157)

Hexagonal units, measuring 3.60 m on a side, with an area of 33 sq. meters, constitute the basic elements of the complex. 6 units form a pavilion.

6 pavilions grouped in a vast circle determine the outline of the entire complex. The interior courtyard protected from the wind covers an area of 400 sq. meters. Each pavilion is topped by a roof structure in the shape of a tent surmounted by a dome having a diameter of 200 cm. 44 occupants are grouped on one level. No stairs, no lift, no threshold.

Hans Chr. Müller, Burgdorf/Berne

Burgerheim Berne

(Pages 158–159)

123 flats of one, two and three rooms are distributed among a high-rise block and two 4-storey wings. All flats command an unobstructed view of the Alps. There is reserved at grade level a sizeable garden area. Horizontal communications lines are reduced to a minimum.

The buildings are interconnected by a partly open passageway system with administration premises and a dining room seating 200. The patio bounded by these facilities constitutes the effective centre of the complex. The flats (measuring 20 to 48 sq. meters) face southeast and southwest, and they are all equipped and furnished comfortably.

Pierre Quillet, Lausanne

The "Clair Soleil" home for the blind and aged at Ecublens

(Pages 160–163)

This building is the outcome of a competition opened in 1963 and was occupied in 1968. The competition program imposed certain basic conditions:

- 1) Clear separation between men and women
- 2) Easy communication routes
- 3) Best possible siting of all the units
- 4) Optimum combination of community life and privacy.

All the individual rooms are equipped in the most modern and comfortable way. Meals can be taken in the rooms if need be. Special attention was paid to the conception of the corridors, which are devoid of sharp angles and hindrances.

Changes in the flooring material and the doorways indicate to the blind residents changes in direction or stairways. The staff is lodged in individual rooms which are well separated from the blind. Aside from the usual common facilities, a large salon constitutes a kind of village square which the blind residents use as a meeting-place. The outside garden with its system of closed circuits permits strollers to orient themselves with ease. The complex functions by and large satisfactorily, but if the experiment were to be undertaken again, it would be suitable to modify certain details. The blind living here appear to be aware of bright light, and it is not necessary to envisage large glazed surfaces. The separation of sexes seems less preferable than more flexible solutions.

In conclusion, the question can be raised as to whether the creation of an "environment for the blind" is also an obligation owed by the architect to the society in which he lives?

Alfred Doebeli, Biel

Residential colony and home for the aged at Steffisburg

(Pages 164–166)

This complex on 9 terrace levels, covering an area of 11,400 sq. meters, with a southern exposure, was made possible by the Esther Schüpbach Foundation and as a result of a competition organized in 1967.

For this non-conventional complex, there was necessary an alignment plan with special regulations. The total complex, which is prefabricated, comprises 14 2-room flats, 42 1-room flats, common rooms, administration facilities and technical premises. The whole is enlivened by the presence of terraces and patios. The residence is on 7 levels with installations in common. The architecture

takes into account the surroundings and the need for both contact and privacy on the part of the residents.

The alternation of the pitched roofs and terraces, as well as the harmonious use of building materials, make the retired people living here feel at home.

Verena Huber, Zurich

Respect for the retired and the handicapped

(Pages 167–170)

The proportion of aged persons 65 years old or over, which was 12.2% in 1966, will be 16% in the year 2000. The majority will enjoy good health or will be only slightly handicapped, but 6% will need constant care. There are some 10,000 to 15,000 of them in Switzerland, confined to wheelchairs or on crutches, and they will be obliged to adapt to a world that is increasingly oriented to youth.

Despite a number of recent efforts, there are very few housing units adapted to the needs of the aged. The Swiss Association for the Integration of the Aged (SAEB) is working on a resolution of this problem.

The endeavours that have to be made in this field can be subsumed in the shape of a schedule of housing requirements. For example, adaptation of plans to wheelchairs. Or again, taking into account the reduced hearing of the occupants, the following will be seen to: adequate acoustic insulation, higher inside temperatures, optimum ventilation, brighter low contrast light, well-insulated flooring that is not slippery. Special attention will be devoted to the stairways, which will sometimes be replaced by ramps or lifts. Thresholds in particular will be avoided.

In the sanitary facilities, the handles and fixtures will be specially designed and installed. Likewise, the kitchens will be specially outfitted. The built-in furnishings will be set between 58.5 and 155 cm high. For psychological reasons, the occupants ought to be able to arrange their own furniture easily. The public rooms in the community buildings will also have to be adapted to special needs. The design of the seats in the lounges will be adapted to the diminished flexibility of their users (height, tilting backs, arms, etc.). Tables and beds will also have special shapes and dimensions.

F. W. Kraemer, G. Pfenning, E. Sieverts, Braunschweig

New plans for student residences

(Pages 171–173)

Student residences up to the present time have been designed for the purpose of encouraging the development of academic communities. The young student was rescued from solitude and supposed to devote himself to communicating with his fellows. In the plans stemming from such a program, common facilities dominated. Experience shows that this gives rise to a whole series of conflicts.

The plans presented here do not claim to comply with any ideological program, but are interested in individual solutions without neglecting the community aspect. Three features can be distinguished: No barrack-like corridors, but a central entrance which confers on each apartment the same value in the total plan. Few common installations, each of the units possessing bath and WC. The community kitchen, on the other hand, gives the student the opportunity to communicate with his fellows on a voluntary basis.

Erich Rossmann, Karlsruhe, Martin Daub, and Jürgen Jürgens, Wilfried Appelt, Dieter Freiberger and Antje-Ute Pawlak, associates

Protestant nuns' house with Bethlehelem kindergarten teachers' training school and St. James parish centre in Karlsruhe

(Pages 174–177)

The competition opened in 1959 called for the mother house of the Protestant nuns; a kindergarten teacher' training school, a maternity training school and a students' residence.

During a lengthy study period, a number of questions came up. What about the future development of Protestant nuns' houses? The demand for teachers in kindergartens is constantly rising, while it has become difficult to recruit young Protestant nuns. For the latter, it is necessary to discover new patterns of existence, which calls for a flexible and mobile building program. What transformations will the kindergarten undergo, and how will the role of the teachers change? For handicapped children the first years of life are crucial. The construction system developed ought to be highly adaptable. For the teachers, it will be necessary to take into consideration a training period that is 50 to 100% longer than heretofore. Over and above the problem of the Protestant nuns, can the church develop other methods involving the grouping of different functions? The church occupies a central position in the heart of the complex. Although square, it can easily be extended, comprises but few fixed elements and is thus widely adaptable. It is no longer a sacred precinct merely, and at the same time it has not become simply a profane assembly hall.

Bernhard Pfau, Düsseldorf

Actuality:

The Dramatic Theatre, Düsseldorf

(Pages 178–188)

The theatre: brief description

1960 – For its town-planning qualities, the project by Bernhard Pfau is chosen from among those by E. F. Brockmann, Richard Neutra.

1970 – Inauguration of the building
Large and small theatres within one building volume, no common foyer.
Large theatre: Traditional type of stage, 28 x 30 meters, auditorium with seating capacity of 1000 approximately, gradual incline without galleries and cross circulation.

Small theatre, Spatial stage of the transformable arena type. Seating capacity between 219 and 309, no orchestra pit. Experimental in character.

Construction: Carrying skeleton of concrete on the curving walls and of steel on the big horizontal spans. Revetment foundation with insulated lining created with the aid of a computer.