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WERK's Fiftieth Year

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With the present issue WERK enters its fiftieth year. There has never been any denial of the unity of the review, based at the outset on the coordination of the Swiss Werkbund and the FAS. However, at the time the historicist attitude still persisted, as evidenced by the "Peterhof" (Seiden-Grieder), the first building described by WERK. We are reproducing, for their documentary interest, a number of photographs of this building.

The Plan of the Apartment

by Otto H. Senn

5

It is only in the 19th century that the rooms of apartments become clearly differentiated, then, after the First World War, there sets in the general phenomenon of shrinkage in the dimensions of flats. The dominant problem at the present time consists in the integration of the kitchen in the living area; the article ends by presenting the various possibilities.

Apartments for the Future (Apartment House Construction in Sweden)

9

by Heinz Joss

Although Sweden escaped the destruction attendant on the war, it nevertheless underwent an extremely acute housing shortage, owing to the constant growth of the population and to the rapid urbanization of the country, a consequence of the ever increasing industrialization of the economy. All this was accompanied by the fact that the rise in the material standard of living induced the Swedes to abandon their old tradition of the one-room flat. Nevertheless, over the last decade, 550 000 new flats have been constructed, thanks to heavy subsidies by the State, a financial participation attended by governmental planning that extends in the most minutious fashion to the smallest details: minimum and maximum dimensions, rules concerning the location of kitchens, waste disposal facilities, ventilation, heating, etc.,—there is practically no aspect that escapes the control of legal provisions, including regulations on parking, playgrounds for children, laundries, etc. The project that is most brilliant from this point of view is Farsta, an entirely new satellite town near Stockholm, which has an atomic reactor for heating, hot water and electricity. It is clear that such far-reaching intervention on the part of the State is not unattended by drawbacks; but, by and large, it can be said that the advantages outweigh the negative consequences and if, for example, the extreme degree of regulation makes the conception of plans very difficult, it should not be forgotten that this difficulty in itself spurs architects to seek ever more carefully elaborated and rational solutions. It suffices to look around the modern suburbs of Swedish towns and to visit some of their new apartment houses to come to the conclusion that this country is indeed building for the future.

Apartment House Construction in Poland

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Project EBO, Warsaw

This is in essence a complex project presenting problems of town-planning, construction, assembly, organization and installation; that is to say, an estate for 10 000 inhabitants with two schools. There are three variants on a plot of land measuring eight hectares: one with sixteen dwellings, the second with eight and the third with four.

The "Sady" Settlement, Warsaw. Architect: Halina Skiebiewska, Warsaw
Housing and households involve a problem as regards flexibility. The current norm—a transitional one—in Poland: 11 m² floor surface per person would appear to render a solution possible, but this is not in fact the case as factors as diverse as the age of the residents, social and professional categories, etc., also play a part. Hence we find attempts being made to re-arrange the rooms in such a way as to offer a maximum in possibilities with a minimum of modifications. The advantages possessed by the corner flat with its windows on two sides furnish the reason why this type of house has been favoured.

Home Life in Finland

22

by Martin Geiger

Little accustomed as he is to frequenting public places, the average Finn lives from 3 p.m. onwards almost exclusively in the bosom of his family. The families themselves are isolated to a considerable degree owing to the tremendous extent of the country. On the other hand, there is little need for isolation within the family so that houses usually have very large living-rooms directly adjacent to extremely small bedrooms for the members of the family and their guests, who, in this country where hospitality is so highly prized, are frequent visitors.

Project for a Group of Low-rent Flats at Lausanne

23

Architects: C. Brugger SIA and F. Brugger FAS/SIA, Lausanne

Sited on a plot of land made available by the authorities, four 9-storey blocks (225 flats in all) plus an area for workshop premises.

Hide Tower, London: Block using Prefabricated Elements

24

Architects: Stillman, Eastwick-Field and Associates, London

This block was constructed for the Westminster City Council: 28 storeys with 160 flats, 20 of which have four rooms, 80 two and 60 only one. From the aesthetic and financial points of view there are advantages in combining prefabrication with partial construction on the site itself.

Estate in East Amsterdam

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Municipal Housing Office. Architect: F. J. van Gool

Estate with 299 flats. A 45-degree rotation as from the entrance makes an interesting solution possible. By and large traditional methods of construction; heavily subsidized by the state.

OKA Apartment House, Wallisellen

27

1961. Architect: O. Kolb, Wallisellen

Despite the smallness of the site and the regulations as to height, it has been possible, thanks to the very concentrated design, to allow for three flats on every floor. Each of these flats is extremely flexible and possesses a kitchen which has been thought of as a "piece of furniture which one can enter".

Otterstall-Durstgraben Housing Estate, Neuhausen

28

1959. Architect: W. Niehus FAS/SIA, Zurich

This estate has been built for the employees' retirement fund of an industrial company and at the present time, with a 12-storey high rise building still to be put up, comprises three blocks, three to four storeys high; flats with polygonal rooms and centrally sited living-rooms.

Fifty Years Ago: The "Sonderbund" Exhibition, Cologne

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by Hans Curjel

This autumn the Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne, presented an exhibition entitled "European Art in 1912—on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Sonderbund Exhibition of Artlovers and Artists of Western Germany". This association by the name of "Sonderbund" was founded in 1909 and had the same aims as the German "Werkbund" founded in 1908. It is true to say that in 1912 stress was principally laid on Van Gogh, Cézanne, Gauguin and the neo-impressionists Cross and Signac, as well as on Munch and Picasso, but nevertheless it is surprising to notice the absence of tendencies now taken for granted such as those of the Futurists. This, however, did not prevent the 1912 exhibition being an explosive force as regards the impingement of vital modern art. The 1962 retrospective exhibition showed in a striking way all the promise there was fifty years ago.

Grandeur and Misery of German Museums

40

by Juliane Roh

In no other country but Germany have the official collections been so clear-sightedly zealous in the bringing together of modern works of art; before the First World War it was above all French works that were sought and after 1918 a great number of German masterpieces were added. Then came the Nazi ban on 'degenerate art' and the dispersion of the most valuable collections. The misguided powers of those days, however, by selling a great number of condemned works abroad, produced just the opposite of what they desired, as the art they thought they were consigning to oblivion in this way acquired international status.