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Some Remarks on American City Planning

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by Martin Geiger

The first article has to do with the town-planning development of Chicago and the history of the Burnham Plan. The excellent accessibility offered by the Loop, the flexibility of the checkerboard street plan and the proximity of the River all created an urban zone which has down to the present day been able to preserve its distinctive character. It is only the evolution of the last few years that has threatened the urban equilibrium, in particular, the application of automation to production and the shift of workers into the tertiary sector.

The Chicago Plan of the IIT

129

At the town-planning division of the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago there has been elaborated under the direction of Prof. Hilbers-eimer a plan for Chicago. It is a consistently thorough conception of a horizontal city, but it also provides for a long-term programme of conversion from the old city to the ideal city.

Marina City—a Vertical City

130

Architect: Bertram Goldberg, Chicago

These high-rise apartment buildings have 60 levels, the lower 19 containing solely parking facilities for cars. These buildings represent a significant attempt to render the city centre inhabitable once again.

The Traffic Engineer's Solution: "Pedestrians, Keep Out!"

132

A misunderstood garden city ideal, combined with the spread of the private motor-car, created cities like Los Angeles, lacking any kind of centre. Improvements require more profound studies than those of mere traffic engineers.

The Chicago Area Transportation Study

133

This study has to do with a project which does not treat traffic as an independent phenomenon, but which goes into its ultimate causes. It is complemented by an urban analysis comprising both daily and long-range movements.

Santa Monica—the Cityscape

134

Plan by De Mars & Reay, Berkeley

This plan renders possible a high residential density and at the same time, side by side with the high-rise apartment buildings, offers a whole range of individual housing units, which, designed as maisonnette types, stand on a pyramidal construction, which houses the garages.

The Elevated Pedestrian Level

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Architects: Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons, De Mars & Reay

On the ground floor are situated the drive-ins for cars coming in from the feeder streets; beneath the buildings transition from rolling to standing vehicles, some shops. The first floor up contains the garages, the second the pedestrian level with garden plots and access to the maisonnette units. The complex retains the flexible American grid-iron street plan.

Planning with the Aid of the Electronic Computer

137

Serge Chermayeff and Christopher Alexander have initiated an attempt not to leave planning projects to intuition any longer but to apply systematic methods. The co-ordination of a large number of requirements can better be undertaken by an electronic computer than by an individual designer no matter how inspired he may be.

Regional Science

140

Under the enterprising direction of Prof. Walter Isard, of the University of Pennsylvania, there has been developed a new branch of social science, known as regional science. It has to do with the study of those relationships and processes of adaptation which relate to the concrete area, the region.

Nashville—Replanning of an American State Capital

141

by Ueli Roth

What is involved here is the regeneration of a city of 270,000 inhabitants whose centre is clogged with traffic and which is girdled by slummy residential areas. The planning method is based on a sweeping reorganization of the city with the formation of interlinked neighbourhoods and re-accessibility of the centre as the key focal point of the whole complex. There is proposed for the centre a large three-dimensional transport terminal for trains and buses with direct accessibility to the pedestrian city. Individual neighbourhoods are reorganized by means of generously conceived plans combining tower apartment houses, terrace houses and underground parking facilities. Special value is at all points laid on over-all architectural composition.

Tradition and Revolution in the Work of Raymond Duchamp-Villon

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by Carola Giedion-Welcker

In 1913 Guillaume Apollinaire in his "Peintres Cubistes" devoted an entire chapter to Raymond Duchamp-Villon, then 27 years of age, the only sculptor represented. In his "Torso of Young Man" (1910) and in the Portrait of Baudelaire Duchamp-Villon had already applied a new idiom of spare elementary volumes. In his "Maggy" (1912), the head of a woman, he ventured an advance into the realm of the grotesque, and in the reliefs of 1911 and 1913 there began a wholly new technique and concern with rhythm. In the preliminary work on his "Large Horse" (1914), in particular, he proceeds along the path leading from the observation of nature to the most far-reaching symbolic moulding of shapes. The "Seated Woman" (1914) shows at the same time how the new expressive methods remain intimately bound up with the formal and cultural traditions of the Mediterranean world. The last work created shortly before Duchamp-Villon's death, the head of the surgeon Gosset (1917), stresses even more consistently the great simplified sculptural shapes in all their elemental force.

Monument to Jost Bürgi in Lichtensteig

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In the Toggenburg village of Lichtensteig the memorial stone to Jost Bürgi (1552-1632), the astronomer and mathematician who was active in Kassel and Prague, had to be replaced. The authorities entrusted the project to the metal sculptor Arnold Zürcher, who in an abstract composition of soaring vertical shapes along with a hovering horizontal one and diagonals sought to characterize the intellectual position of Bürgi at the transition point of two epochs.