

Summary

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Poul Elnegaard, Bent Elnegaard, Copenhagen

Fabrique d'appareils de radio et de télévision à Søborg près de Copenhague (pages 88—91)

A/S Bravour est placé sur un terrain de 9000 m² acheté en 1943. Le premier bâtiment fut construit en 1945 et comporte une superficie utile de 2000 m². Dix ans plus tard, en 1955, l'on construisit 600 m² supplémentaires devenus déjà trop petits 3 ans plus tard. L'on décida une solution radicale comportant 1600 m² de plus. L'emploi d'un module est évidemment inévitable. Notons la nécessité toujours importante de plans élastiques dans l'industrie.

Kaare Klint† et Vilhelm Wohlert, Copenhagen

Magasin pour instruments optiques à Copenhague (pages 92—94)

Dans le cas présent il s'agit de construire un magasin sur un terrain extrêmement long et étroit. La partie frontale s'élève sur deux étages alors qu'une galerie partage la hauteur dans la partie centrale. Un petit bureau, un atelier et un WC achèvent le plan. Le bois joue une rôle prépondérant étant utilisé aussi bien sur les parois, sur le plafond que sur les balustrades. Notons que l'éclairage s'adapte fort bien à l'ensemble.



Summary

Steen Eiler Rasmussen, Copenhagen
A Dane sees Danish Architecture (pages 53—56)

With the work by Steen Eiler Rasmussen, which appeared in 1940, on architecture in the Scandinavian countries we have to do with an expert on northern architecture, principally as regards Denmark and Sweden. Moreover, Rasmussen often plays the role of a mediator between the architecture of Northern and of Central Europe. Rasmussen tells us that nothing delights him so much as a visit from foreign architects to whom he may explain the architecture of his country. At every such meeting the exchanges of ideas are numerous and fruitful; they render possible an overall view of the essential principles of architectural development with due respect being paid to the opinions and impressions of present-day creators. In fact, the architecture of a country cannot really be understood unless its inhabitants and their way of life are also understood. Rasmussen draws our attention to the fact that he does not represent either a government or a research organization but is quite simply an individual trying to give us some idea of the characteristic features of the architecture of his country, that being the chief aim of his book.

In the main chapters of his little book Rasmussen makes use of such words as trade and utility, romanticism, mass, classicism, body, space and surface, modesty and decoration, etc. This range of terms enables him to characterize Scandinavian architecture with precision; we may refer, for instance, to his descriptions of the town halls of Copenhagen and of Stockholm in which he demonstrates the affinities and at the same time the differences between the Danish and the Swedish peoples.

In the chapter entitled "romanticism" he is mainly concerned with Asplund and Øsberg. This is where the concept "mass" will play a preponderant role as he seeks to describe the massive vigour of Scandinavian architecture, an aspect that so readily arrests the attention of the foreign visitor. We may refer at this juncture to the great apartment blocks of Kay Fisker.

There is no doubt whatsoever that classicism to this day plays a leading role in Scandinavia, particularly in Finland. Likewise, the expression "modesty and decoration" applies admirably to the small private houses of Scandinavia.

At the BDA Conference last summer in Munich Rasmussen spoke on the subject "Examples of Modern Architecture in Denmark". We have taken our most typical illustrations and observations from this extremely interesting Conference.

When he shows us the harbour of Helsingør, Rasmussen tells us: "I am going to take you to the shore of the sea, Denmark being in fact entirely surrounded by water, along with most of its towns. The country is a small kingdom, and the King, naturally enough, is an admiral, albeit a very democratic one..." "The Danish flag, and in the background the sea; we are not nationalistic or heroic, on the contrary, the Danes are the dwellers of a country where everything is level, calm and without great contrasts; the Dane is modest, his flag is not a war banner, his environment is subdued—perhaps even a little too much so—the Danish idyll recalls Hans Christian Andersen." "No point in Denmark is more than 60 or 70 km from the coast, the country has no mountains, the summer is not very warm, the winter is not excessively cold..." "Outlines blur, everything is greyish blue, without sharp contrasts; the month of May is very pretty, it invites one to go rambling and takes one perhaps to a thatched house, 'Liselund Castle'. This castle—if we venture to give it such a name—seems to come out of a fairy tale, it appears to have been constructed for a dream princess. It was built in 1792 by a rich landowner for his young bride Lisa, his princess, and there they spent their honeymoon." At that time many houses of this type were built, in France as well as in Germany or Great Britain, but none has remained so celebrated. It was in 1915 that a group of young architects, criticizing contemporary architecture, came to measure, draw and study on the spot the famous Liselund Castle. As they were enchanted by the simplicity and the formal purity of the building, they brought out a book on the subject in 1918, which has since made its way around the world. The plan of the house is extremely simple, its furniture is of a charming purity and modesty.

The book on Liselund Castle also enjoyed a great success in Sweden. At that time the famous town hall of Stockholm was under construction. The young Swedish architect Gunnar Asplund said of this castle: "After reading the book on Liselund Castle, there is nothing left for me to do but to destroy my plans and to start all over again afresh!" Asplund was then engaged in building the little cemetery chapel in the Stockholm forest; the pillars of the chapel constitute a continuation of the trees of the forest. Rasmussen mentions this chapel to illustrate the influence exerted by Danish architecture on the Swedes and vice versa. The Faaborg Museum is one of the first examples of this type. The sequence of exhibition rooms in this museum constitutes a series of contrasts in design, colour scheme and lighting. The walk ends in the garden.

In its time this building was a sensation. It was towards 1912—1915 at the very time when the cubists were defining the principles of modern painting in France. We can still see in the Faaborg Museum the first furniture by Kaare Klint, the creator of modern Danish furniture. Throughout his life Klint studied different types of furniture, their dimensions, their susceptibility to standardization. A sketch made in 1917 shows the proportions of the human body compared to the proportions of the furniture. This sketch was to become the beginning of an activity that lasted all through his life: first of all experiments with proportions followed by the first attempts at standardization. These studies are little known abroad and yet they constitute the basis of contemporary Danish furniture. Then Klint founded his school of cabinet-making; the Bauhaus group in Dessau was realizing the same ideals along parallel lines. Walter Gropius' idea was to train pupils capable of creating logically without imitating "ready made" designs. Klint would say to his pupils: "A piece of furniture is above all an instrument, a useful tool. It is up to us to create the most practical tools, to make progress just like men of science; therefore let us employ scientific methods." Generally speaking, Klint's furniture has a conventional air about it but is of exceptional quality. He makes studies of all existing types of furniture in order to isolate their faults and good qualities and then to create types of

improved quality. The function alone of a piece of furniture, he says, is not sufficient; due respect must also be had for the structure of the materials employed.

Klint's influence made itself felt in nearly all the buildings of the Twenties. The buildings of this period are no longer differentiated in the manner of conventional architecture, apartment house blocks are standardized, an apparently uniform and monotonous sequence of windows constitutes the elevation of the buildings; and it was at this very time that details began to be studied in relation to dimensions, correct design and structural aspects. Kay Fisker is the one to be thanked above all for making our residential barracks into true architecture. Likewise the town hall by Arne Jacobsen at Rødovre is not a simple imitation of American buildings, but rather a logical continuation of the preceding creations. In speaking of this architecture, Rasmussen employs the epithets "in good taste", "cultivated", "correct", and at the same time he compares this architecture with that of Saarinen in Detroit. Rasmussen then goes on to Jørn Utzon and his theatre in Sydney; here he speaks of a building replete with rhythm, rearing up like a flower on the skyline. We should mention too the residential developments of Søndergorte Park, which are typically Danish according to Rasmussen. Rasmussen then shows us a number of dwelling houses where again the sea plays a considerable role. Like Liselund, they are often picturesque; the gardens are very important, sometimes being redolent of Japanese gardens. The plans are very free, but the walls severe and disciplined.

To conclude, Rasmussen comes to the Louisiana Museum, built 50 years after the Faaborg Museum. This building which is full of youth and freshness is the work of practically unknown architects, Jørgen Bo and Vilhelm Wohlert. Wohlert is a pupil of Klint's. The plan of the little museum is most ingenious. By showing us a group of visitors in the museum garden in summer, Rasmussen once again draws our attention to the peaceful and magnificent landscape of Denmark. Danish architecture is sober, lacking all elements of the bizarre and sensational. This architecture was born in a little country with no room for daring experiments but which knows how to cultivate correct design and high quality.

Erik Sørensen, Copenhagen.

Villa on the Strandvej at Klampenborg, Copenhagen (pages 57—60)

In this case a house had to be built for a family of five persons on an extremely uneven plot of land. A path leads to the basement of the house. From the basement itself one ascends either to the bedroom section of the house or to the living quarters by way of the appropriate stairs. The plan is simple and comfortable. In this instance the Danish architect, Sørensen, whose work we have discussed previously in 3/1957, 12/1957 and 7/1958, has selected a reinforced concrete skeleton construction. Depending upon the elevations and requirements, the inter-spacing takes the form either of a wall or a window. Depending upon the functions involved, the windows vary, sometimes being used for ventilation, sometimes for illumination. The details of this villa have been very carefully studied. Wood plays a pre-eminent part as well as certain construction elements, which have been heavily stressed, as in the case of the reinforced concrete girders, where these allow a clear-cut distinction between the various rooms.

Knud Friis and Elmar Moltke Nielsen, Aarhus

Architect's House at Brabrand near Aarhus (pages 64—67)

The solution shown here is rather unique. The land at the architect's disposal is surrounded by forest on the east and by a lake on the south. The building has been sited in the northern section of the plot and entirely surrounded with a cloistral wall, which on one side constitutes a garage and studio and on the other defines the ground floor of the villa. The upper part of the house is set like a box upon this wall. This box is only open on the north and south sides. The plan of the house has been very carefully elaborated; certain construction elements remind one of the Japanese way of building. Wood, which has been used to a large extent, is employed as a facing material. The house

as a whole is extremely comfortable, whilst being at the same time sober and elegant.

Knud Friis and Elmar Moltke Nielsen, Aarhus

Architect's Private House at Skade (pages 68—70)

Here we have a typically Danish villa influenced by farmhouse style. The building as a whole gives one an impression of robustness in both construction and materials. The latter are generally in their natural state. Attention should be paid to the very pleasing plan. The ideas represented in the house are clearly different from those to be found in architecture influenced by Bauhaus.

Otto Weitling, Copenhagen

Private House at Hareskovby near Copenhagen (pages 71—73)

This young architect's house, which is about 15 km away from Copenhagen, will be built in two stages. The illustrations in this issue are of the 1st stage. The plot of land covers no more than 800 m² and is near the forest; the ground slopes slightly.

The basement contains the secondary parts of the building, such as the heating plant, store rooms, laundry and a dark-room for photographic work. The architect's office opens out directly on to the atrium. A hanging staircase leads to the living quarters. The living-room will act as a bedroom until the second stage of building has been completed; this second stage will see the construction of the bedrooms for the parents, two for the children and a playroom. In this case we do not find the untreated brick wall generally employed by Danish architects, for bricks have been replaced by porous concrete blocks. The roof caulking is placed upon a construction of wood insulated with glass fiber.

Once again, without being luxurious, the house is very comfortable. It also serves to show that it is possible to build a private house in several stages.

Jørn Utzon, Hellebaek

Atrium Colony at Kingø (pages 74—75)

On a very uneven site the architect has succeeded in placing 63 private houses, with only two types of plan. A large living-room serving also as a dining-room is located beside the kitchen which forms a unit with the heating plant and bath. Three bedrooms open on to a corridor. The plan has an L shape, thus creating an atrium. A canopy near the living-room serves as a parking area.

The second type has a studio instead of the garage canopy, with the garage being located at the other end of the L. The arrangement of the 63 maisonettes on the site is lively and proves that standardization does not necessarily lead to monotony, provided it is well thought out.

C. Th. Sørensen, Eske Christensen, Svend Høgsbroe, Kay Fisker, Copenhagen

Nygaardsparken Town-planning Scheme at Brønøyster near Copenhagen (pages 76—79)

The settlement in question is an extension of existing districts in the town of Rødovre (see issue 11/56: Rødovre Town Hall). It can be used as an example of a typically Danish housing estate. Various types of flats, restaurants, shops and gardens have all been well worked out. A hotel and a cinema are planned. Both plans and construction are, here too, extremely simple and unpretentious. Everywhere we meet that sobriety so typical of Danish architecture.

Acton Bjørn, Frederik Fogh, Axel Olesen, Copenhagen

Primary School at Lyngby near Copenhagen (pages 80—83)

This involves the extension of an already existing school. 10 more classrooms, a music room, a school kitchen, a gymnasium and the caretaker's flat have to be added to the complex. The architects have chosen a form already employed in Danish farms: a building centred round a yard. The plans, materials and construction have been very carefully thought out. As in all Danish architecture, wood and bricks are of pre-eminent importance.

Nils and Eva Koppel, Copenhagen
Building Center in Copenhagen
(pages 84—87)

On a corner site permitting construction in 6 stories and a mansard floor, the architects have erected a building covering the entire area at 2nd storey level. From the 2nd storey up, the building goes around the lower plan at a depth of 7 meters. On the ground floor we find a reception and information lobby where there are seats, desks and the access to the elevators. To the right and left of the information booths there is the access to the large exhibition hall, the centre of the

building. Two flights of stairs lead from this hall to the basement, on the one hand, and to the first floor, on the other. The basement contains various lecture rooms as well as several exhibition rooms and store rooms. On the first floor there are several exhibition rooms running along a 7 m-wide gallery. The upper floors are given over to administrative offices of other concerns; these outside offices have their own staircase and elevator. On the roof storey there is the canteen and a roof garden. The building as a whole is sober and extremely effective. Mention should be made of the simple and well thought out construction.

Poul Elnegaard, Bent Elnegaard, Copenhagen
Radio and Television Factory at Søborg near Copenhagen (pages 88—91)
Bravour Ltd. is sited on a 9000 m² plot of land purchased in 1943. The first building was erected in 1945 and covers a working area of 2000 m². Ten years later, in 1955, a further 600 m² was built up but this proved to be too limited only 3 years afterwards! A radical solution involving a supplementary 1600 m² was decided on. Recourse to a module was, of course, inevitable. Note the ever-increasing importance of elasticity in planning for industry.

Kaare Klint † and Vilhelm Wohlert, Copenhagen
Optical Instrument Shop in Copenhagen (pages 92—94)
In the present case a shop had to be built on an extremely long and narrow site. The front section is two storeys high whereas a gallery corridor cuts off some of the height in the centre of the building. In addition there is a small office, a workshop and a lavatory. Wood is of pre-eminent importance, it being used for the walls, ceilings and balustrades. It is worth noticing that the lighting harmonizes well with the total complex.

Unser Februarheft 1962

Ein Heft über Dänemark ist ein Bericht über ein Land mit ungebrochener, gesunder Baukultur, mit beneidenswert hohem Handwerksstande, mit einer völlig intakten Tradition, das heißt mit einer kulturellen Situation ohne den klaffenden Riß eines Entwicklungsabbruchs, eines Grabens, wie er in fast allen, außer den skandinavischen Ländern im 19. Jahrhundert entstanden, aufgebrochen und letztendlich heute noch nicht überwunden ist.

Ein Heft über Dänemark soll auch die spezielle Eigenart des kleinen, meerumspülten Landes am Rande des zentraleuropäischen Kontinents dartun, im Gegensatz zu den drei anderen skandinavischen Staaten. Hierzu liefert Prof. Rasmussens Vortrag wichtige Schlüsselerkenntnisse.

Dänemark hat sich als eine Insel der behaglichen Menschlichkeit auch eine gewisse innere Statik erhalten können; es ist nicht, wie zum Beispiel Schweden, der amerikanischen Versuchung erlegen, es ahmt den Lebensstil von der anderen Seite des Atlantischen Ozeans nicht nach, wie sein großer Nachbar. Dänemark ist eine der letzten Inseln eines Lebensstils voller Ruhe, Konzentriertheit, innerer Kraft und Gesundheit. Man kann in Dänemark noch ganz als Mensch leben. Man kommt überall mit echten Menschen, mit ruhigen, nicht nach dramatischen Entwicklungen drängenden Menschen ins Gespräch.

Etwas von diesem Geiste, dem Geist Christian Andersens, sollte das Heft ausstrahlen.

Die in diesem Heft erscheinenden Architekten und Objekte bedeuten dabei keine Klassifikation, auch der Umfang des Heftes erhebt keinerlei Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit. Viele sehenswerte Bauten konnten aus Platzgründen nicht gezeigt werden. Ein wichtiger Beitrag zum Bauen in Dänemark ist dabei das neue SAS-Hotel in Kopenhagen von Arne Jacobsen, das wir im Märzheft 1961 gezeigt haben.

Die Redaktion

Notre cahier de février 1962

Un cahier réservé au Danemark est une documentation nous renseignant sur une culture florissante, un artisanat de niveau exceptionnel, une tradition absolument intacte, c'est-à-dire une tradition dont l'isolation culturelle n'a pas été soumise à des ruptures de développement, ruptures telles que nous les avons vécues dans les autres pays de Scandinavie au courant du 19ème siècle.

Un cahier réservé au Danemark doit pouvoir aussi nous renseigner sur les traits de caractère particuliers du petit pays entouré de mer en marge du continent de l'Europe centrale, par opposition aux autres pays de Scandinavie. A ce sujet quelques remarques de monsieur le professeur Rasmussen, qu'il prononça lors d'un discours remarquable.

Le Danemark, en tant que pays de «douce humanité», a toujours su maintenir une certaine stabilité, par opposition à la Suède, qui s'est laissé influencer par la «tentation américaine». Le Danemark n'imité pas l'Amérique comme son grand voisin suédois. Le Danemark est un des derniers pays où règnent la tranquillité, la concentration, la vigueur de caractère et la santé. Au Danemark, c'est encore «l'homme» qui règne. Partout les gens sont authentiques, calmes, sans aucune exagération dramatique. Nous espérons que notre cahier saura mettre en valeur cet esprit danois très particulier et agréable, cet esprit des œuvres de Christian Andersen.

La rédaction

Our February Issue 1962

An issue on Denmark is a report on a country with a pristine sound conception of architecture, with an enviably high standard of handicraft, with a completely intact tradition, that is to say, a cultural isolation that has not been torn asunder by modern industrialism, which has swept over nearly every Western country, outside Scandinavia, since the early 19th century.

An issue on Denmark should also bring out the special character of this tiny sea-girt country on the periphery of Europe and show how it differs from the other three Scandinavian countries. Prof. Rasmussen's lecture sheds a great deal of light on this point.

Denmark as an island of peaceful humaneness has also been able to preserve a certain inner equilibrium; it has not succumbed to the temptation to Americanize itself, like Sweden, for example; unlike its larger neighbour it does not imitate the way of life prevailing across the Atlantic. Denmark is one of the last refuges where there survives a style of life full of calmness, concentration, inner strength and health. In Denmark one can still live as a complete human being. Everywhere one can meet genuine people, quiet people not always rushing into some momentous decision.

This Issue is intended to convey something of this spirit, the spirit of Hans Christian Andersen.

The Editors

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