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Industrialization of building – but how? 497

by Leonhard Fünfschilling and Diego Peverelli

The two authors, who have assembled the documents on pre-fabrication in this issue, in their introduction pose the following question: Is the industrialization of the building trade proceeding in the right direction? It is at the present time mainly concentrated on the pre-fabrication of heavy concrete elements. Other already available experiences, for instance, those involving steel constructions, remain unutilized, as are the bold conceptions of lattice supporting structures composed of light construction elements. The authors suppose that building research is not taking sufficient account of general standpoints and that one step leads uncritically to the next without anyone's ever asking whether one is still on the right track. The heavy investments demanded by the industrialization of architecture, for their part, simply consolidate the trend that has already become established. All the more reason, then, for a halt and a query as to whether all development possibilities are being given uniform attention.

Central storage building of Swissair in Kloten 498

1965–1967. Architect: Peter Steiger, Zurich
Production technique: Beton AG, Villmergen

The static system consists of an L-shaped support, which when combined in twos yields a U, and in fours an O. The L-shaped support carries one-fourth of the load of a construction field. The girders are Z-shaped, lie with the higher part up and, in turn, carry the deck slabs.
The system, which is suitable for hospitals, laboratories, universities, etc., was here employed for the spare parts storage building of Swissair. There became apparent its great combination potentiality, especially as regards the composition of the building, which is divided into higher and lower work sheds.

SWS Housing Project, Schlieren 503

Architect: Werner Stücheli BSA/SIA, Zurich
Execution planning: Systembau AG, Zurich

Two four-span, twelve-storey high-rise apartment houses could be put up at low cost and in the brief construction period of 7½ months. The heavy concrete elements were fabricated in a plant in the field, the lighter elements installed direct from the delivery trucks. The selection of construction parts and the optimum averaging out of the enormous variety of conceivable construction combinations were effected with the aid of a computer.

Barracks for the Army Engineers, Bremgarten 506

Contractors: Swiss Federal Works Department, Building Inspectorate IV, Zurich
Architects: Rudolf and Esther Guyer BSA/SIA and Manuel Pauli BSA/SIA, Zurich

Above the basement level, all the buildings are of entirely pre-fab construction. The system was developed by the architects in co-operation with the firm of Element AG, Veltheim. All the elements employed could be produced with only 33 basic moulds. The buildings display a uniform, severe and strongly three-dimensional articulation. The U-shaped niches of the elevation pillars lead to all kinds of advantages on the interior and are fully exploited in the most various ways.

Single-family house in element construction 509

1967. Architect: Rainer Senn, Basel

Rainer Senn has developed a grade-level single-family house that does maximum justice to many varying situations and demands on the part of owners. The width of the house represents a given value, the length is left open; owing to the fixed construction of the freely supporting roof, all outer and inner partitions and walls can be installed as desired. Also, subsequent alterations are possible beneath the freely supporting roof.

Experimental serial houses in Niederurnen 512

Architect: Thomas Schmid SIA, Zurich

The firm of Eternit AG has for some years been examining the possibilities of manufacturing supporting stressed-skin panels. This method produces a wall element capable of taking a load and furnishing insulation; the method involves the gluing together of different layers, with the outer layers being extremely firm but unstable owing to their thinness, and the inner ones being insulating and non-supporting. The resulting strength and rigidity of the panel exceeds the sum of the supporting properties of its components many times. The construction system applied here contains additional novelties, for example, the cavity element for the flat roof and the Kanis element of the cornice construction. This package of light-weight elements constitutes a practicable light construction technique.

Gäbelbach Point-houses in Berne 516

Architects: Eduard Helfer SIA, Berne; H.+G. Reinhard SIA/BSA, Berne

These high-risers, as far as their construction is concerned, correspond in large measure to the Schwabgut project (cf. WERK 8/1968, p. 480).

Peikert pre-fabricated school building system 518

Development: Peikert Bau AG, Zug; associate: Romeo Stalder SIA, Adliswil

This school building system permits the industrial manufacture of individual elements and at the same time gives maximum freedom to the single architects. The school buildings erected in accordance with this system are adaptable both to different sites and to varying conditions and requirements. The system is economically advantageous both in rough construction and in finishing; although various construction phases are eliminated or simplified, local construction workers can, even so, be employed.

Industrially fabricatable housing units 521

Architects: Jean Duret BSA/SIA, Geneva; Raymond Reverdin SIA, Geneva; Slobodan and Dobrila Vasilievic SIA, Geneva

This team of Geneva architects have submitted a proposal of prospective character within the scope of the competition organized by the Executive of the Coal and Steel Organization in Brussels. With a minimum of element types – lockers of thin-walled sheet-metal sections – there is obtained a maximum of combination possibilities, which can be applied both to individual homes and to one- or multi-storied apartment houses.

Op-Art in Germany 525

by Juliane Roh

The Zero Group, founded in Düsseldorf in 1958, assembled a number of artists who exploited light as a medium of expression. Otto Piene (born in 1928) and Heinz Mack (born in 1931) employ it in terms of a mystique of light which heightens the intensity of living. Piene: 'Art now consists of spirit which is manifested in unique and transitory phenomena that are felt and experienced by a large public.' Mack: 'The theme of this work: Beauty, Purity, Light, Splendour, Space ... the desire to see what cannot be touched.' Günther Uecker (born in 1930) opted for 'a white zone, mounted with white structures which, by means of light changes, can be made to oscillate'.
Not belonging to the Zero Group are three artists who stick more to the level of purely optical-physiological experience: Uli Pohl, who grinds out cavities in blocks of acryl glass, so that new luminous forms arise, Ludwig Wilding (born in 1927), who shoves net structures at angles to one another, so that the eye perceives figures and patterns, and Gerhard von Graevenitz (born in 1934), who sets for example rods of equal length to rotating, so that they either control one another's movements reciprocally or stop one another.

The painter Peter Stämpfli 533

by F. A. Baumann

Peter Stämpfli, born in Berne in 1937 and at the present time resident in Paris, took the decisive step in 1963 in clarifying his conception of a picture. The canvas was liberated from all accessories, and the object, enlarged and monumentalized into a state of non-natural rigidity, appears to be isolated before a neutral white ground; usually it is subtly restricted to one detail. Stämpfli's objects are the stereotyped symbols of modern affluence: make-ups, cars, cocktail glasses. The author draws attention to the parallels with the 'nouveau roman': concentration, enlargement, intensification of the casually observed detail.