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CAMILLE PISSARRO: "LA RUE DE L'ÉPICERIE," A STREET IN ROUEN. Louvre, Paris.

MODERN ART AND MODERNISM

By Lord Harlech, P.C., G.C.M.G.

A LECTURE DELIVERED TO THE ARCHITECTURAL STUDENTS' SOCIETY, UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG, MAY, 1944.

It is not easy to say when the "Old Masters" ended and "Modern" art began. As for "Modernism," using this word to mean something different from "Modern," several writers have defined modernism as "since Cézanne." It is well to remember that Cézanne was born so long ago as 1839, in the second year of the reign of good Queen Victoria.

But all are agreed that in the 19th century, and especially in France, the arts of painting and sculpture took a succession of new forms. That French 19th century artists have profoundly influenced the art of Europe and America is indisputable, and still to-day we are living under the influence of movements—in fact of "revolts"—that first became apparent in Paris.

There were, I think, three main lines of revolt. First there was the revolt against the academic or classical traditions. This may be summed up in a recorded saying of Courbet when he withdrew his pictures from the Paris salon of 1858 and set up a hut of his own near the Pont de Jena with the superscription "Réalisme." "Ce Monsieur Raphaël, je n'aime pas du tout." Courbet's enemy was "pseudo classical" practice taught in the art schools which led to polished finities under the guise of the "ideal." He produced life-sized naturalistic studies of contemporary peasants and large scale realistic landscapes. He advocated "contemporary subjects freed from any sentimental or literary association."

Two years later, in 1860, there was held in Paris a Loan Exhibition of the paintings of Velasquez. This was a potent cause of the next rebellion. This, too, was partly a revolt in favour of realism and away from historical or literary association in picture making. But its further significance was in the re-discovery of "quality" in pigment, of a new realisation of the laws of "medium," of the right inherent qualities of oil paint. The refusal by the Salon in 1863 of all the paintings of Manet, Monet, Degas, Renoir, Whistler and Fautin Latour—all the work we now regard as of the greatest significance in the history of French painting—led to the formation by the "refused" of a group who called themselves the "Impressionists," and henceforth they boycotted the Salon which ostracised them.

In 1867 also in Paris was held another historic exhibition—the first exhibition in Europe of Japanese colour prints—chiefly the designs of Utamaro, Hokusai and Hiroshige. The younger French artists enthused over them. The critics stormed pro and anti. The Concourts collected Japanese

prints with avidity and wrote books on Utamaro and Hokusai. Whistler henceforth signed his increasing Japanese pictures not with his name or his initials but with a butterfly. There emerged from this impact a new sense of design, of selection and simplification with a view to changing the "art and science of picture making," and the cliché "art for art's sake" became both current and controversial in England as well as in France. The essence of this movement was the claim that every true work of art is a self-existent thing, irrespective of its content or secondary association, to be judged solely on its merits as a thing of beauty in itself and largely as "decoration."

In 1870 Claude Monet, Pissarro and Sisley, three of the leaders of the impressionists, were in London during the Franco-Prussian War, and they there saw and fell for the later work of the English Turner and for the sketches of Constable.

But perhaps the most important rebellion of all was the rebellion by artists against the photographic camera. Ever since the invention of the camera painters had tried to compete with it in a painstaking desire for exact rendering of the facts and details of nature without discrimination. They sought to produce "coloured photographs" or the nearest they could get to them. Then they realised that this was a blind alley, and Whistler made his famous reply to Ruskin's rhetorical nature worship to the effect that "sitting on the keyboard of a piano made neither a great musical composer nor even a pianist." Ruskin, as a writer and lecturer, dominated the taste of mid-and late-Victorian England. Ruskin had an emotional passion for Gothic architecture—more particularly of the 13th century, for Tintoretto and for Turner's landscapes. He wrote many thousands of pages to try and tell the world why. Like many Victorians, he had a strong ethical bias, and was determined to find moral, by preference Puritanical, reasons for his likes and dislikes. He hated Whistler and all "modern" French movements. He was right to admire and enjoy what he did enjoy, but the reasons for his taste that he worked out intellectually and rhetorically were incredibly wide of the mark. He even tried to prove that a pointed arch was morally and aesthetically superior to the round arch, that both Tintoretto and Turner were always true to nature—true even to nature as seen by the photographic camera, which is just nonsense and untrue. However, in all art criticism I am all for the perils of the Ruskinian method, namely, study



THE BATHING PLACE

"LA GRENOUILLÈRE"
Stockholm National Museum.

and enjoy a work of art first, and if you feel the urge to tell the world about it, try and work out why you like it or dislike it. What I am sure is wrong is to have a fixed theory and to judge works of art according as they fit into this preconceived, doctrinaire view of aesthetics.

* * *

But to return to my historical narrative. In England, as earlier in France, there was a succession of revolts against the Royal Academy and all it stood for. First the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood—men who were good craftsmen and good romantics but as artists and painters their movement led nowhere. Incidentally, the most talented of their brotherhood, Millais, eventually became President of the Royal Academy in succession to that orthodox classicist Lord Leighton! But the "impressionist" revolt in Paris was followed—owing not a little to Whistler—by the formation of the New English Art Club. While the society portraits, the problem pictures, the pictures of the year that have annually bespattered the walls of Burlington House with their ephemeral glare for the last hundred years are mostly forgotten; those painters who first challenged the public at the New English Art Club in Suffolk Street have survived and are among the most admired possessions of the better public galleries throughout the civilized world. The four English artists—all much in the tradition of the French rebels—who

still "count" are Tonks, Augustus John, Walter Sickert and Wilson Steer—one should perhaps add to them Muirhead Bone, the etcher, who to-day ranks with Rembrandt and Whistler as the greatest painter etchers of all time. Homage to Manet and Whistler may be said to be the common characteristic of these Englishmen of the New English Art Club.

Another word about French 19th century developments. Courbet's drive for contemporary realism was followed by many landscape painters—the "pleine air" school as it is called. But a further modern impetus was given by those painters who satyricized contemporary life and raised the art of satire—of caricature even—to that of fine art. Daumier, who designed woodcuts for the radical illustrated papers, was in fact a great artist and a noble painter. Two other important artists exploited these fields. Toulouse-Lautrec, an aristocrat of feeble health and body, recorded with great brilliance the life—the vice and squalor as well as something of the humanity—of the demi-monde of Montmartre. Forain rendered with drama and pathos the contrast between the judicial functionaries and the poor and the criminals in the Paris police courts. More recently an even more savage brush has been that of Rouault. In subject and treatment these men have gone even further than Courbet and the great impressionists to "épater" the classical tradition of the

Italian Renaissance, of Poussin, Ingres, and Alma Tadema. Such rebels were in the true tradition of Voltaire with his "écrasez l'infame."

But in the last decade of the 19th and the first of the 20th century there emerge from neglect three French artists who ushered in the most violent of all the rebellions and paved the way for Modernism as opposed to just the "Moderns"—namely, Cézanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin. They became known as the "post-impressionists." The first two lived and painted mainly in Provence, the third in the tropical island of Tahiti.

Cézanne alone sought to explain in words his intentions as an artist, namely, "I desire to make of Impressionism something solid [substantial is probably the better translation of "solide"] like the art of the Old Masters." And again he said: "I am the apostle of the third dimension." Let me warn you that what I have just said about Ruskin may be true of Cézanne and that even his own literary criticism of his own work may not be true of his actual production as an artist. That he admired Giotto sincerely is obviously true. His apparently conscious revolt against the atmospheric of the impressionists is partly due to the environment of Provence, that land of vivid sunshine and brilliant colour, of rocky forms, and bold mountain outlines, dark cypress trees and red-roofed white farms against an ochre land and the staring Mediterranean blue sky. The earlier impressionists were as much the product of Paris and its neighbourhood as was Cézanne of Provence. Actually, Van Gogh, the more powerful and sterner genius, painted Provence and its Provencal inhabitants rather better than ever Cézanne did. Gauguin fell in love with the mediaeval stained glass in the cathedrals and churches and then went and painted Tahitian natives, the pointsettias, hibiscus and tropical foliage in terms of mediaeval stained glass.

The post-impressionist exhibition in London when I was still an Oxford undergraduate aroused a storm. Roger Fry and Clive Bell talked and wrote it up, and all the other critics of that day and most of the older artists talked and wrote it down. Old friends stopped speaking to each other as a result of poor old Cézanne, who could hardly sell a picture for a few francs in his lifetime—while only just before this war one was sold in London for £13,000!

Cézanne was a lovely colourist who invented new and brilliant colour harmonies. He could paint still life—especially apples—better than anyone in the history of painting. He could do fresh faint water colour sketches of the greatest brilliancy and charm—bright washes of pure colour without sharp outlines or edges. Equally on occasion he could actually draw rocks and rock structure finely. Cézanne has come to stay as an important and lovable European painter of distinction. But more tosh has been written about his work by literary men than most, and instead of looking at Cézanne's



▲AUGUSTUS JOHN: RACHEL

National Gallery.

pictures many modern artists have merely read the writings of the critics about tactile values, significant form, abstract design, etc., and, like Clive Bell, have gone haywire in consequence. One young Englishman of some talent paints Yorkshire as if it was Provence in the manner of Cézanne. Directly or more often indirectly Cézanne has become or been made responsible for a great deal—some good and quite a lot very bad.

Cézanne was, I suppose, a rebel against the neo-academism of landscape impressionism plus Velasquez, and he has been made by others the starting point of the further rebellion against nature as such. He is put forward as the fairy god-mother of abstract painting in its various forms of cubism, vorticism, pointillism, and finally surrealism. Braque and Pablo Picasso are the most redoubtable of the cubists and post-cubists. Picasso started as an excellent ordinary impressionist painter whose flower pieces—perfectly normal—are among the best flower pieces ever painted. Then followed his "blue period"—wan figures of hungry proletarians painted entirely in the key of blue. Then came the better known and more numerous abstract paintings: compositions of quasi geometrical shapes, mainly in black, white and greenish browns. Then with the Spanish Civil War his full-blooded imaginative surrealism like the formidable night of "Guernica."

PAUL CÉZANNE
STILL LIFE



Metropolitan Museum of Art,
New York.

The Surrealist Society was formed in Paris of heterogeneous and conflicting elements with Dali at their head. Dali, when asked to lecture on surrealism, appeared before his audience in a submarine diving suit complete with air pumps attachment and a microphone inside the helmet. On canvas he sought to depict a new and frightening universe of his own morbid creation.

But there was one qualification for membership of the Surrealist Society that had nothing to do with art. All had to be political communists, devoted to Karl Marx and the Third International. In 1937 the Surrealist Society in Paris broke up and split 50-50, not on any artistic issue, but over the second great Moscow purge when Radek and other followers of Trotsky were done in by Stalin.

I see no reason why you should not hang on your wall or on the wall of a public gallery "abstract" pictures of cubes, squares, rectangles, part circles, symbols of eyes and ears in odd places as decoration if you like them—and some people do. After all, fine Persian, Bokhara or Caucasian rugs look quite well in some rooms on some walls. Much of the best decoration of the earliest Greek vases, of Chinese bronzes and pottery and porcelain is abstract and geometrical. The attempt to get form and pattern with the minimum of content is perfectly legitimate—again provided you do not talk tosh about it.

The special form of tosh is of course that any representation of recognisable or familiar objects is "impure" art, and the intervention of "subject" or any literary or humanistic association interferes with the free emotional expression of an artist's subjective ideas. The latter must be expressed in symbols—but only if those symbols are unique and neither naturalistic, imitative nor associable. I do think that the attempt to develop abstract painting has improved—and improved most successfully some of our modern textile and carpet designs. In such applied arts the movement has a contribution to make—but I still feel that in the fine arts man cannot get away either from man himself or from the visible universe that was made by someone else before man was evolved in it. True, the artist, like the poet or the musical composer, is or should be essentially creative and not merely imitative. But man, being himself a creature, being a product of someone else's universe, if he is to be an intelligent and intelligible creator on a small scale, has got to be in the same line of country as the Creator who designed the stars, the seas, the mountains, the forms of vegetation and animal life, the colours of the rainbow and the flowers and sunsets.

This is becoming dangerous like a moral—even a theological argument à la Ruskin, but I think it is true that in art there are ultimate limitations of art as there are in man himself,

and that unless those limitations are recognised and accepted we shall get nowhere. At any rate, Aeschylus and Plato recognised this truth, and they, if any, were really first-class minds and great literary artists. "Il faut cultiver votre jardin" was the final conclusion of Voltaire—and a garden is a garden and will be so till the end of time.

I have told you the history of the moderns and modernism in recent paintings. You are architects to be. I have more experience among pictures than I have among buildings, but I may venture a few parallel ideas amidst architecture. At any rate I have been to New York.

In the Italian Renaissance of the 15th century it was the sculptors who set the pace and blazed the trail which the architects and painters of revived humanism followed. Michael Angelo was equally great as painter, sculptor and architect. Good Florentine as he was, he was first and foremost a sculptor. Personally I happen to be of opinion that Donatello, the sculptor, was the greatest artist that Italy has produced, greater than any painter or architect, including Michael Angelo. But this is by the way. Renaissance architecture has rightly been called the architecture of humanism.

The modern movement in painting coincided with that romantic movement called the Gothic Revival. In the 19th century France once again looked at Rheims, Chartres, Bourges and Amiens as no longer "barbarous" and uncivilised, but as the highest expression of the French spirit in the arts of all the ages. Ruskin and others in England felt the same way, but at the end of the 19th century there was a rebellion against such worship, and for the last generation it is the Romanesque in architecture, as well as sculpture, that has received greater admiration than the Gothic. Later still this tendency led to a further reaching back to a predilection for Byzantine ivories, for dark age mosaics, and in paintings, the Byzantine derived art of El Greco. This movement was symptomatic of the corresponding turn from the more naturalistic and representational to the more stylised and the more symbolic. The Romanesque sculptured doorways of Moissac, Vezelay and Autun now take a higher place in general estimation than those of Rheims, Amiens and even Chartres. As for Gothic art, the early pointed and geometrical styles have given way to greater admiration of the latest phases of Gothic art, more particularly as developed in Spain and England. Another remarkable revival has been the renewed interest in classical Baroque of the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Formerly regarded by Goths and classicists alike as utterly "debased," pilgrimages are made to and books written about Austrian, Spanish, Polish and especially Portuguese Baroque. The interior of the great Cathedral of St. James of Compostella in Galicia is the finest Romanesque cathedral in Europe, but past writers wrote about the disfigurement of the exterior in the 18th century. Now the noble 18th century granite Baroque exterior is even more admired than the Romanesque interior.

But architecture has in the last generation undergone the greatest change of all the fine arts by the development of the

use of new media. Steel and reinforced concrete have revolutionised "style." Michigan Avenue, Chicago, and Manhattan Island have witnessed the marriage of fine architecture with large scale functional engineering construction. The demand for vast office buildings, power houses and institutions has been fortunate in finding the engineer architects who can design and execute functionally with dignity, proportion and resource. Even for dwellings, the detached and semi-detached small house is giving way before the increasing popularity of the large blocks of flats and apartments. Hotel life and hotel dwelling is taking the place of the older idea of every man's home as his castle. In England, as in America, the large semi-communal dwelling is increasingly popular with the middle and professional classes, while in the former country a roof and yard of one's own is still much more popular with the wage-earning classes than even "improved" Karl Marx Hof's à la modern Vienna, or the inter-war housing developments at



PAUL GAUGUIN : THE WHITE HORSE

Louvre, Paris.



VINCENT VAN GOGH: COUNTRY ROAD BY NIGHT
The Hague.

Leeds or Stuttgart. Artificial restrictions, such as the unwillingness of certain Trade Unions to allow their members to lay more than so many bricks a day, thus increasing the cost of homes and making for delay in catching up with demand, have resulted in the elimination of old methods of building and the use of metal and precast materials, with advantages in cost, speed of erection and convenience of upkeep.

New materials and the new media have called forth a new aesthetic, and there is an increasing recognition that what is most functional and convenient, can be made, and is more aesthetically satisfying as well. For witness look at the new workers' dwellings, as well as factories, in the new Soviet cities of Magnitogorsk, beyond the Urals, and even in Moscow itself.

These vast communal buildings provide new opportunities for the painter as well as the architect. The pioneer in modern mural painting designed in and for an industrial mechanical age is undoubtedly Diego Rivera, the Mexican mural artist. Here in South Africa you have Le Roux, who in no small degree derives from Rivera. In sculpture the might and power of modern machines achieved a great success in Jagger's striking Artillery Memorial at Hyde Park Corner in London after the last war. But in no art must an artist

be and remain more conscious of his medium than the sculptor—be that medium marble, other stones, bronze or wood. What the French impressionist painters learnt from Velasquez, the supreme technician in oil paint, sculptors must learn from Donatello, whose style varied according to his very variable materials. Some of the most notable successes of Karl Milles, the Swedish sculptor, have been designed for and executed in cast glass. Nearly all great artists have been both rebels and inventors. But always a great artist must be a great craftsman. All too many of the modernists forget this. No artist can shirk the discipline of fine drawing. Science and self-expression are not enough. Hand craftsmanship always tells in the long run. And in addition to craftsmanship must be added personality. A great artist must be a great man, a great mind, whether the artist be an architect, a sculptor, a painter, a poet, a dramatist or a musical composer. An artist's whole personality is immanent in the works of art he creates. Great art must be timeless like the Iliad of Homer, the tragedies of Shakespeare, the etchings of Rembrandt, or the symphonies of Beethoven. There is a case for showing that an artist is the product of his age and environment—he cannot escape entirely from either, but the greatest artists have always transcended their time, nationality, place and environment, and belong to the order of that rare thing "Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus." That which is only of its own age is as ephemeral as its age. I do believe that there are eternal standards. The Parthenon of Athens is both of its age and of all ages. This "joy for ever" is a difficult business to analyse and comprehend, but it is true in human experience. There are some things like the literary perfection of the Parables (the Prodigal Son, for example) in the Synoptic Gospels—some chorus endings from Euripides that have eternal qualities which only supreme individual genius has sometimes produced. The comprehension and appreciation of all art comes to one slowly by study and experience of individual works of art, and can be neither taught nor learnt by any prescription or formulae. And all the arts are one. As regards art I am a convinced Holist. I must make a pun. Works of art are the products of the Holy Spirit of man. The assessment of the value of that spirit in one's contemporaries or near contemporaries is more difficult than in the case of individuals more remote. The critic, like the artist, is partly the creature of his age and environment, but wise is the critic who takes the comprehensive view and seeks the greatest variety of stimulus. Roger Fry, a great if sometimes controversial critic, who wrote about Maya and negro sculpture, about architecture and painting and even music, wrote of the Venetian painter Titian that he was the artist who "from his Pisgah heights foresaw all the developments of European paintings for four centuries to come." Bernard Shaw wrote of Shakespeare that he was so modern that he was born three hundred years too soon, and that as long as the English language survives Shakespeare will be fresh and green for each succeeding century. The judgments of posterity are at least disinterested and free from contem-

porary vanities and egoisms. Remember, too, that the appreciation and understanding of works of art is only partly an intellectual process—and this in fact is a secondary process. It is the emotional shock at first sight—the instant recognition by a trained and experienced observer who has become sensitive to such things and so reacts to works of art, that is more important. The wider and longer one's experience, the quicker and the more thrilling one's response. Before I went to Florence I had heard of and seen photographs of the famous Ponte Vecchio—the old mediaeval bridge with the little jewellers' shops on it. But when I first stood on the Ponte Vecchio and looked down the Arno I suddenly said to myself: "There—the Ponte Santissima Trinità (about which no one had ever told me) is the most beautiful bridge I have ever seen." I have seen many other bridges since, but I still back that Florentine bridge previously unknown to me against all others. There may be no reason or sense in it. It was a sudden emotional reaction possibly peculiar to myself. There is, therefore, in writing or lecturing about works of art this inevitably uncertain quantity—the personal reaction founded not upon reason or what anyone else has told one. So if I have to-night adopted for my lecture a detached historical account of the subject which you chose, it is in order to dilute my predilections with some show of reason. I do genuinely like a lot of modern painters—Boudin, Renoir, Daumier, Sisley, Utrillo, Sickert and Wilson Steer are among them. I delight in Whistler as an etcher, but much less as a painter. I think Maillol and Despiau great but not supremely great sculptors. In South Africa to-day I think Broadley is much, much the best painter. But please, please do not take my emotional reactions for eternal verities! I like to find my enthusiasms and condemnations shared—which is egoism and vanity. All I can urge upon you is to keep on looking at works of art, reading or hearing them, and form your own opinions and have your own fun and make your own discoveries in your own way. Finally, never take anything from authority with authority. Use your own eyes and your own mind—but work both. When an undergraduate I spent two hours every morning for a month in the Dresden Gallery, looking, noting, analysing and writing. That was but the beginning of a long and delightful apprenticeship not yet finished.

The chief danger I see in some aspects of Modernism is the tendency to shirk the difficulties of good craftsmanship. No artist, old or modern, is an artist worthy of the name unless he is also a fine craftsman—above all a fine draughtsman. Courbet had good grounds for rebelling against the contemporary consequences of academic imitation of Raphael—but to condemn Raphael completely and out of hand is to condemn one of the greatest draughtsmen and craftsmen who ever lived. All too many modernists, in their desire for some-



PABLO PICASSO: FEMME ASSISE Tate Gallery, Millbank.

thing new or for what is called "untrammelled personal self-expression," imagine that they can escape the discipline and even drudgery of sound craftsmanship and sound technique in any given medium. New and splendid discoveries, an enlargement of the range and capacities of fine art have been achieved by artists in the last hundred years, but ultimately posterity will judge this achievement not so much by what was novel or ephemeral but by the eternal canons of sound execution and true merit as a craftsman revealing a mastery of any given medium of expression. For example, I feel that posterity will say of the sculptor Epstein that he was a fine modeller in clay for reproduction in bronze and a bad stone carver. Good workmanship alone is not enough. But equally no artist's work can endure without it. That which is shirked, shoddy or superficial in Modernism will become more and more apparent. There is no easy way to greatness in art or in anything else. The ultimate judgment is the judgment of posterity.

Acknowledgments for Illustrations—Pissarro: "La Rue de l'Épicerie" [Photo: Braun & Cie, Mulhouse-Dornach]; Monet: "La Grenouillère," from "The Impressionists," Phaidon Press, Vienna; Van Gogh: Country Road by Night, The Hague, Mrs. H. Kroller-Müller [Photo: Galeries Druet, Paris] from "Van Gogh," Phaidon Press, Vienna.

CITY OF JOHANNESBURG—COMPETITION FOR NON-EUROPEAN HOUSES

In March of this year the City Council of Johannesburg invited architects registered in South Africa to submit competitive designs for houses for non-European occupation. At the Council's invitation, the Transvaal Provincial Institute of Architects appointed Mr. N. L. Hanson, B.Arch., A.R.I.B.A., M.I.A., and the Council appointed Mr. H. G. Tomkyns, A.R.I.B.A., M.I.A., to act as assessors to adjudicate the designs submitted and to make awards.

* * *

An extract from the official Conditions of Competition dealing with the accommodation required reads as follows :—

ACCOMMODATION.

Designs for two types of houses (Types "A" and "B") are being asked for to following requirements :—

Each competitor may submit one alternative design only for each type, but on separate mounts and separately dealt with in specification and estimate.

It is the intention of the Council to erect a very large number of houses. Consequently considerable repetition of selected types is likely to take place.

The sites on which the houses will be constructed are approximately 100 x 50 English feet (50 feet being the road frontage).

For various reasons these sites have a wide range of aspects, so that it is not possible to give specific directions to competitors in this regard. Level sites may be presumed for the purposes of this competition.

Due consideration should be given to the provisions of the Council's Building and Public Health By-Laws.

The houses, although sub-economic in character, should represent maxima of efficiency and economy, as outlay is to be covered by a long-period loan and an economic life of about forty years is desirable. This calls for care, not only with regard to first cost, but also as to maintenance expenditure. While competitors are expected to take these facts into account, it must also be emphasised that designs of sound architectural quality are required.

Houses under Type "A" are to have a living room of 180 to 200 sq. ft., and two bedrooms, each 150 sq. ft. in area.

Houses under Type "B" are to have a living-room of 180 to 200 sq. ft., and three bedrooms, two of which are each 150 sq. ft., and one of which is approximately 100 sq. ft. in area.

In both types suitable provision is to be made for :—

- (a) Cooking : Coal or wood-burning stoves only can be installed.
- (b) Food Storage.
- (c) Sanitary Requirements : Water-borne sewerage will not be available for a considerable period. Competitors are asked to include in their plans a future W.C. to each house.
- (d) Ablutionary Requirements : Facilities provided should be of a character most suited to low-cost installation and maintenance.

Steeps or porches may be included at the competitor's discretion, but the economic factor must here, as elsewhere, be constantly borne in mind. No electrical work is to be allowed for, either in the plans or in the estimate of cost.

* * *

ASSESSORS' REPORT

INTRODUCTION :

The holding of this competition is an expression of the Johannesburg City Council's intention to make use at the earliest possible moment of practical suggestions in the planning and construction of houses of limited dimensions and cost. The practical aspect, therefore, has been treated as the primary directive by the Assessors. Competitors were given a considerable margin in which to exercise their own discretion—the onus, as it were, has been with them to combine the elements of plan and structure in the most economical and efficient manner.

The planning elements are simple indeed; what was required, then, was firstly a workable and aesthetically satisfying arrangement of these elements, and secondly a system of construction in which the maximum simplification would be applied to well-tried or potentially efficient building materials and methods. The integration of the one objective with the other was in particular the task set the architect-competitors.

THE PROBLEM .

Broadly, the problem can be broken down into six divisions, although rigid separation is naturally not always possible. The most important of these divisions are: (1) General Planning; (2) The methods and materials of construction; (3) Value in terms of cost and size; and (4) Architectural quality. Minor factors are: (5) The provision and arrangement of amenities, and (6) Siting. The scope of each is here briefly outlined:—

1. General Planning: Economy and design, which is perhaps the primary consideration, should be gained through the functional efficiency and articulation of the plan elements. Ease and convenience of circulation should therefore be allied to compactness and appropriate grouping (e.g., of services).
2. Construction: Materials of durable quality alone can satisfy the requirements of long-period use and low-cost maintenance. While some margin was left to competitors in the choice of materials, immediate availability of at least the raw materials involved in any departure from standard or conventional practice must be looked upon as a pre-requisite of acceptance. Local conditions of production cover, in addition to the materials question, the type of labour required for mass housing at minimum cost. Here again any deviation from the present make-up of the building labour force may take place only within the existing industrial framework. Choice of materials and constructional method is clearly bound up with actual cost and must be related to it.
3. Value: Cost must be measured in terms of value, as no absolute limit was placed on competitors' designs in this regard. Strict economy, however, was the stated guiding factor, and the limits are those which sub-economic housing naturally impose. Competitors are expected to justify thoroughly the incorporation of any features not usually to be found in low-cost housing.
4. Architectural Quality: The architectural character of the houses should be related to the nature of mass housing, where the emphasis, as in this case, is on the single family unit (separate houses). Though the main elements of design are few—roof and wall surfaces, fenestration and a necessarily somewhat box-like form—their logical use in conjunction with given materials can, in trained hands, be aesthetically satisfying.
5. Amenities: Due regard to convenience and health should be apparent in the arrangement of interior amenities and services. Ingenuity should be exercised in extracting the maximum usefulness from the few fittings which may with economy be provided. The possibility of easy furnishing and the adequacy of storage space are alike important in family dwellings of small compass.
6. Siting: Although no direction could be given regarding site aspects, adaptability in the planning and siting of houses can largely account for the most likely variations.

The task set the competitors was simultaneously to reconcile the aspects of the problem set out above. Solutions of many types have been submitted. In general, however, two characteristic plan-types emerge. These are, firstly, the simple rectangular plan into which the required accommodation has been fitted with more or less success; and, secondly, the irregular plan, where wings express the main elements and are articulated in some cases by means of links, and, in others, abut in the more conventional manner. In both instances double-pitch and single-pitch roofs have been used.

The methods and materials of construction likewise fall into two categories. The standard or prevailing building methods, on the one hand, and the experimental structure or finish on the other. The term experimental is meant to include all materials which have not yet been proved thoroughly reliable under South African conditions, either by direct experience or by officially conducted research. Research of this nature has been seriously neglected here; consequently the Assessors realise that competitors who submitted the non-standard types would be handicapped if the only criterion was durability or cost under the test of experience. Departures from the conventional, therefore, have been closely examined, particularly from the angle of immediate practicability.

The opinion of the Assessors, insofar as plan shape is concerned, is that the rectangular plan (or an approximation to the rectangular plan) is the one more likely to achieve the required economy in layout and consequently in cost. Irregular plans, while offering advantages in many directions, would probably prove proportionately the more expensive, particularly in roof construction and necessarily increased external walling; and also, possibly, would be less efficient when built "en masse." If simplicity in building operations is a decisive factor, only the rectangular plan can be held to give a satisfactory basis for low-cost construction. The Assessors have judged the plans accordingly.

Recognition of the merits of the rectangular plan, however, must carry with it an acceptance of certain disabilities. Where the articulated plan can achieve a satisfactory separation of fundamentally different functions (such as the living and eating and sleeping areas), the rectangular plan imposes difficulties in circulation and internal zoning. In almost every instance the use of the living space as a means of access to the various rooms was found to be necessary, and has been accepted as such by the Assessors. Further, if services are grouped for economy, separation as between the sleeping and bathing zone and the living and cooking zone is not easily attained.

The distinction between the rectangular and articulated plan types may also be instanced in the structural sphere, in roof construction. In the case of the articulated plan, where wings abut, double or single pitch roofs incorporate valleys, and often, though not of necessity, hips as well; where links are formed between separately roofed wings, a second method of construction is invariably introduced. The greater complexity in both instances compares unfavourably with the

simplicity of the double or single pitch roof of constant span over the rectangular area.

Low cost, in the Assessors' view and as demonstrated in the plans submitted, may be achieved in two ways. Firstly, in the adoption of standard materials, used in a normal and rational way; and secondly, in the utilisation of readily available raw materials of potential efficiency and economy when put to non-standard uses. Standard materials include corrugated iron or asbestos roofing (the latter with reservations), stock and faced brickwork, steel, wood or concrete window frames and sashes, timber roof members, granolithic on concrete floor surface, terrazzo and concrete washing and plumbing fixtures, etc.; while the non-standard includes all forms of concrete walling, roofing and roof members, of pre-cast or "in situ" manufacture, structural steel and newly-developed floor finishes (pre-cast vibrated or spongecrete slabs, "Greenbarb" and sawdust-cement tiles, ashcrete, bluegum poles, etc.). Pricing for the former is known or ascertainable, but for the latter is often indefinite or conjectural. In these circumstances, the Assessors were prepared to accept both approaches, with the overall proviso that new methods should apply only to plans of strictly limited dimensions.

As far as external walling is concerned, an acceptable standard, in the Assessors' view, is that reached by an 11 in. cavity brick wall, plastered or faced externally. Concrete or other walling not likely to achieve the same standard in insulation, damp-proofing, inertness or durability has been rejected. Roof coverings submitted show some variation. Most competitors used corrugated asbestos sheets, a few corrugated iron, and others, again, concrete cast "in situ" or in the form of pre-cast slabs or tiles. Asbestos has been accepted by the Assessors, although a stricter adherence by manufacturers to the British Standard Specification is required before the material can be unreservedly recommended. Corrugated iron is the more dependable in many respects, but the addition of an insulating ceiling is essential just as it is desirable in the case of asbestos. The case for concrete roofing has not been presented with a great deal of conviction or substance, and the Assessors have been chary of accepting the schemes put forward. Floors consisting of granolithic on concrete surface bed are not considered satisfactory in living or bedrooms, and alternative surfacing or additional sub-surface insulation has been looked for. Sanitary and bathing facilities are considered to be adequate if the future W.C. is accessible either internally or through an external porch, and if at least a shower and a wash hand basin are included and are similarly accessible. Cooking requires a small stove, an externally ventilated food store and a kitchen sink, all, of course, in working relationship to one another. Further storage space for household goods, clothes and fuel is needed in one form or another.

The Assessors' attitude to the problem set, conditioned in part by the results achieved by the competitors, is thus defined in general terms, and a more detailed critique of the schemes submitted may now be undertaken.

THE AWARD :

The competition is divided into two sections—houses of the type "A" (two-bedroomed) and the type "B" (three-bedroomed), and the following total number of designs were received :—

Houses of Type "A"—50.
Houses of Type "B"—42.

In many cases an alternative solution was sent in by competitors, and this has been treated as a separate entry.

Disqualified under rules of competition :—

Type "A"—3.
Type "B"—2.

In general, the objectives in the two classes are identical, and the observations already made apply with equal force to both. Although the adjustment required under Type "B" is the relatively minor one of an additional small bedroom, there is a marked difference in quality between the two classes. Designs for Type "A" are, on the whole, of a higher standard than those for Type "B," and this difference is reflected in the Assessors' award, which is as follows :—

TYPE "A" :

DESIGN placed FIRST	No. 16
DESIGN placed SECOND	No. 35
DESIGN placed THIRD	No. 15

TYPE "B" :

NO AWARD.

Design commended for reasons stated below : No. 16.

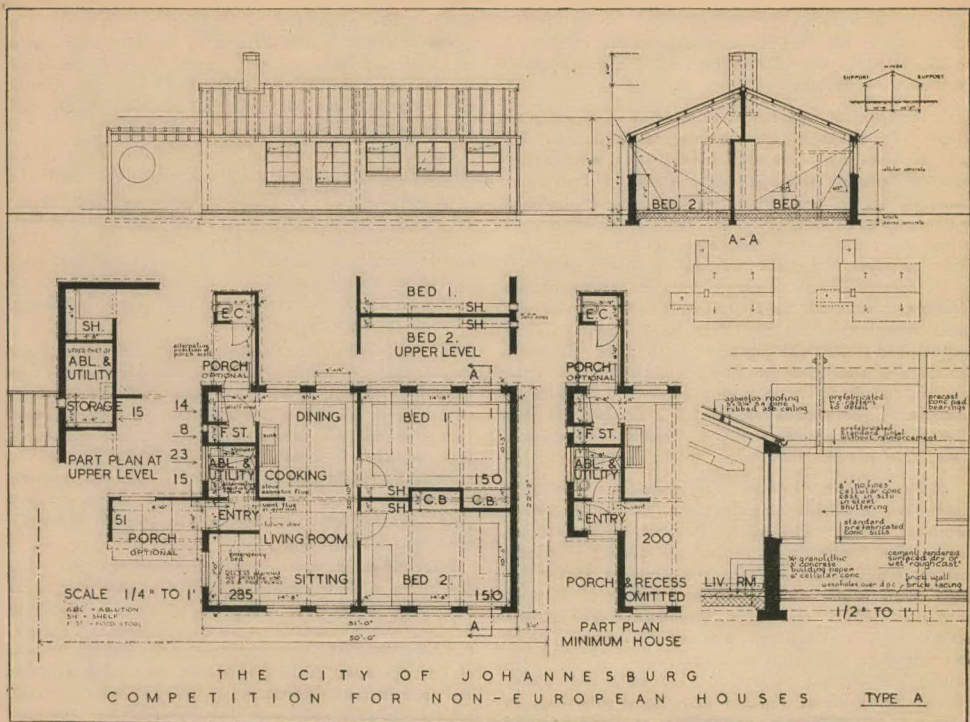
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DESIGNS FOR TYPE "A" :

The standard reached by the designs submitted for Type "A," although somewhat higher than reached in the second class, nevertheless cannot be considered as at all adequate. No design submitted was without fault of relatively serious nature. In spite of this general deficiency, some of the planning and detailed suggestions, as well as occasional true architectural quality, merited recognition. The Assessors, therefore, with a distinct reservation as to overall and individual standard, felt justified in making an award. They did not consider that any one design is sufficiently workable in terms of construction and cost, or successful enough in architectural terms to be carried out without further thought and technical modification. At the same time, nothing short of full-scale experiment can determine the value of particular forms of construction incorporated in many designs, including the first premiated design.

DESIGN PLACED FIRST—No. 16 :

This scheme, excellent in many respects, suffers, in the first instance, from inferior presentation in draughting, though



No. 16. FIRST PREMIATED DESIGN. E. J. Danos, of Cape Town

certainly not in reporting. Insensitiveness in drawing is reflected, as always, in slovenly detailing. The Assessors did not allow this initial drawback to colour their judgment, and went on to consider the solid merits of the scheme.

The main plan shown (not the "minimum" type) represents a most economical arrangement of the required accommodation. The plan proper covers a total area of 687 square feet, one of the lowest submitted by any competitor, and is of simple rectangular shape. By thus simplifying the shape, external walling is reduced to the minimum figure of 106 feet. The indirect side and rear entrances to the house are of advantage in maintaining the integrity of the living space, which inevitably is called upon to fulfil a multiplicity of functions. It is the circulatory link between entrance and ablution room, on the one hand, and the bedroom zone on the other; it contains: the cooking and wash-up fixtures; it is used for eating meals; and, finally, it must provide a sufficiency of unencumbered space for leisure use. No single

room can be efficient in all these uses, but the limitations in size and cost necessitate the acceptance of such an arrangement. No. 16, by elongating the shape of the room, and by the use of a screen wall and a recess, has succeeded in imparting the maximum subtlety to limited space.

The competitor has placed the "ablution room" adjacent to the entrance—and makes out a good case for doing so—but a separation between bedrooms and ablution room is a less happy though not fatal consequence. By this arrangement, moreover, plumbing is reduced to a minimum, a factor which cannot be overlooked. The living room runs through the entire width of the house (20 ft. by 10 ft.) and thus may be ventilated and lit by windows on opposite walls—in this case an admirable feature. Food storage space is sufficiently at hand and yet insulated from the direct heat of the stove to round off the compact cooking arrangement. The house would gain immeasurably by the addition of the front and back porches, with the future W.C. placed outside and not

inside the far from spacious ablution room. A merit in this scheme lies in the flexibility applicable to the building or omission of these two adjuncts (the roofing of one of which presents some difficulty).

The construction suggested is certainly of an experimental nature. This competitor advocates the use of 8 in. thick walls built of "No-Fines" concrete, claimed, when plastered, to have the insulating and waterproofing qualities of brick 11 in. cavity walling. In Great Britain, the Inter-Departmental Committee on House Construction (the Burt Committee) devotes a long Appendix to recommendations for the use of "No-Fines" concrete. In dealing with walling systems alternative to the conventional, the Report states that "Many concrete walling systems, either as pre-cast or poured 'in situ,' are good alternatives. They give scope for the employment of unskilled labour, with the possibility of some increase in the speed of erection of that part of the building. . . . The use of certain light-weight aggregates and light-weight concretes has been considered, and it is thought that they offer scope for development." ("Architect and Building News," 31st March, 1944.)

The fact remains, however, that "No-Fines" concrete walling has not been officially tested for South African conditions, and its suitability for local use is therefore not known. The competitor has not brought evidence from local sources to support his advocacy, and judgment must in the meantime be reserved. Nevertheless, a definite attempt has been made in this scheme to utilise locally produced and available materials to achieve quick and sound building, while cost reductions may, at the same time, be anticipated in the greater use of unskilled labour. The rough-cast plaster external facing will be objected to by some authorities, on grounds of durability and maintenance, as it does indeed compare unfavourably with faced brick. It must, however, be accepted if concrete walling of any type is to be accepted. For shuttering, reference is made to Scottish methods ("No-Fines" has been extensively used in Scotland) but no closer investigation set down, and here a real, though not perhaps an insuperable difficulty may be encountered. The cost factor alone, shown in the most favourable light, is not likely to be as advantageous as claimed, particularly as construction is by no means simple in certain respects. The central wall, for example, which includes cupboard recesses, a beam and slabs at the lower level, is taken up to support the hinged roof concrete rafters, and must be constructed, on the face of it, in several operations. Indeed, the greatest weakness of the scheme lies in the roof construction, and it is difficult to see why advantage was not taken of the transverse central wall, between living room and bedrooms, to support heavier purlins, thus dispensing with the numerous pre-cast concrete hinged rafters. Not that the latter method is not feasible, but it has weaknesses, such as the danger of movement and subsequent wall cracking at the foot of the rafters; a danger made worse by the deliberate omission of overhanging eaves, by which necessary protection is afforded to walls and window

heads. The penetration of sunlight, put forward as a governing factor, is little affected by the incorporation of a reasonable overhang. A more cogent reason advanced for the omission is the use of a single sheet of asbestos to span from ridge to eaves, but it was felt that the difficulty must be overcome by other means.

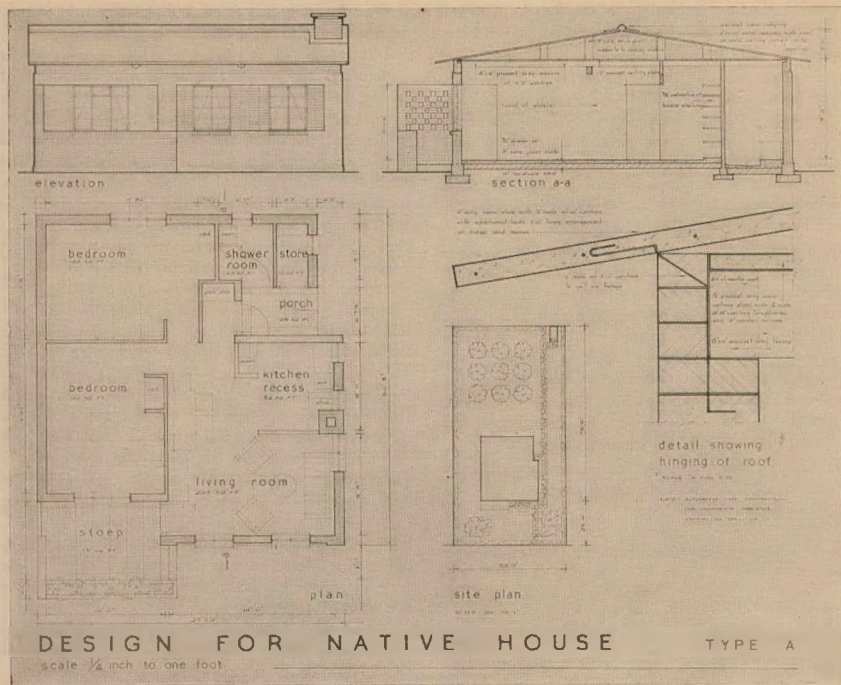
The asbestos roof covering is supplemented by a ribbed asbestos ceiling, but insufficient attention has been paid to the fixing and finishing of the sheets, a weakness even more apparent in the handling of the asbestos eaves gutter. The floor covering is two-colour granolithic laid on a concrete bed, in turn superimposed on a layer of "No-Fines" concrete, presumably used as an insulating material. This specification should be treated as a rough suggestion, the details (and the efficacy) of which remain to be established.

The cost of the house is put down at £365. Taking into account such constructional items as asbestos ceilings, steel shuttering, insulated floors, faced brick plinth and generous steel windows, this figure is almost certainly an under-estimate. This competitor has, however, controlled overall dimensions and plan shape to come within judicious limits, so that even a substantial increase should still keep the total cost relatively low. Moreover, adherence to a module in setting out must yield increased efficiency and speed, even if alternative materials are substituted.

What the design does lack is architectural character. Too great stress is laid on pseudo functional expression (e.g., larger and smaller windows according to a somewhat arbitrary formula), while too little effort has been expended in bringing the various functions into an harmonious relationship. In spite of this, the house, in its general massing of main elements and adjuncts, is not unpleasant, and, with adjustment in detail, could be given a positive architectural character. The main defect at the moment is crudity in fenestration, and, in a lesser degree, in finish, in neither case a major fault.

The plan of the house does not offer any special advantages in siting. With windows along the two longer and opposite walls, the rooms would benefit or suffer respectively from the advantages or defects of north-south and east-west aspects. Site planning (outside the scope of this competition) could, even so, make the most of the plan.

The amenities of the house far exceed those offered in any other scheme submitted. Apart from the thought which has gone into their provision, a notable contribution has been made in a planning sense—namely, the release of additional space by utilising the volume of the interior for necessary storage. This is achieved, for example, by casting a concrete slab over the entrance lobby, and gaining access to the resultant space from the ablution room. It will be noted that the total volume of the house is kept low, though within municipal regulations, by reducing the height of external walling to a minimum. The interior as a whole is generously fitted, so that furnishing will be a comparatively simple matter. The only lack appears to be provision for fuel storage—an omission to be found in almost every design—and the principal



No. 35. SECOND PREMIATED DESIGN. E. C. Gilham and J. C. Humphreys, in association with Miss A. Dobson and Miss E. M. Spence, of Johannesburg

extravagance the large window areas, justifiable only on the dubious assumption that the tenants' resources are sufficient to replace breakages and provide curtaining.

The Assessors have pleasure in recommending this scheme to the City Council, and, in doing so, draw attention in particular to the efficiency of its planning, the potentialities of the proposed construction, and the excellence of the Report, which is both well-documented and comprehensive in presentation.

DESIGN PLACED SECOND—No. 35:

This scheme, though soberly planned, falls below the standard set by the winning entry. It is competently presented, and does not cover new ground to any marked extent. Nevertheless, certain features, particularly in plan, are noteworthy.

The plan itself demonstrates how zoning can be effective even when confined within a simple and somewhat rigid square shape. To this extent the layout is a contribution in the field in low-cost housing. The back porch, on to which the

shower room and the future W.C. open, is well placed in its accessibility to the kitchen recess and the bedroom entrances. The bedroom entrances for which no doors are provided, are grouped together in the internal angle of the living area, while the bedroom interiors, by means of well-placed cupboard recesses, are partially screened. The living area is well articulated; the cooking recess, though part of the room, is yet not visible from the sitting space, and conveniently adjoins the living space. The openness of the plan ensures reasonable cross-ventilation.

The advantages gained in planning have been paid for, however. Plumbing is somewhat complicated by the separation of sink and shower room, while the generous space allocated to the functions of cooking, eating and leisure means an excessive floor area. The latter is, in fact, 767 square feet, plus 45 square feet under the roof for the front porch. The plan is not flexible enough to allow for the omission of the porch. This floor area, considerably greater than that of the first premiated design, would require substantial reduction in

practice; such reduction is possible in the living room and would in fact benefit the plan from a structural point of view.

This competitor puts forward a strong case for the use of conventional walling methods, that is, brick 11 in. cavity walls, plastered or faced externally. The roof shown (cast in situ concrete), however, is less conventional. The alternative asbestos roof is preferred by the Assessors, who make the award on the alternative only. The roof construction is, in any case, not simple in that repetition of a single structural unit is not possible. Nevertheless, no insuperable difficulty is presented here.

Diversity in appearance is suggested by the use of faced brick and plastered wall surfaces in panels of various purposes and dimensions. Though perhaps a feature attractive to prospective tenants, it must be remembered that construction would be complicated by these somewhat arbitrary variations. Separate asbestos ceiling panels are included and would add to the comfort of the tenants—which cannot be said for the granolithic floors, specified throughout. The estimate given, £485, is slightly on the low side for the given area, but reduction in both area and price is in any case necessary.

Although siting is not especially considered, some adjustment for various aspects would no doubt be possible. The amenities provided are above the average. Generally, this design has competence and character, and it is felt that a livable house would emerge after required reductions had been made.

DESIGN PLACED THIRD—No. 15.

This well-presented scheme, though deficient in some important respects, has some excellent points to recommend it. The plan shape is in effect rectangular (119 ft. of external walling, excluding the stoep); the roof system permits simple deviations, particularly at the lower end of its single pitch. The three main rooms—bedrooms and living room—form the principal elevation, capable of orientation towards the most favourable aspect.

The positioning of the service functions under the lower part of the roof is thoroughly sound and workable. In addition, these services are well grouped for economical installation. The living space is, architecturally, one of the most successful submitted, the square eating and leisure zone, unbroken by cross-circulation, showing a real grasp of three-dimensional spatial planning. The relationship of cooking facilities to the rest of the living space is well conceived and handled, so that, taken as a whole, a subtly expressed efficiency is gained.

In the light of these solid and positive advantages, it is all the more difficult to account for a serious defect in plan. Means of access and egress is confined to one external door, which is in itself the service door to the cooking space. Circulation into and out of the house is thus at all times through one of the busiest (and preferably the best kept) parts of the house, and no opportunity given, even, to returning workers to wash before entering the living room. A second

outside door, situated at the end of the corridor in the sleeping zone, would give an immediate improvement.

The stoep, which opens off the cooking space, is of generous proportions—91 square feet, in fact—and if included in the floor area places the house well above the economic maximum. It is not, however, an integral part of the house in the structural sense, and could be omitted without difficulty. The area of the house, excluding the stoep, is 810 square feet, which is in excess of the maximum. Most of the excess is accounted for in the living space, which, including as it does the cooking arrangements, covers an area of 246 square feet. Indeed, the attractiveness of this whole section would, in practice, have to be considerably reduced, but its workability should not in that event be seriously impaired.

Again, a strong case is made out for the use of standard materials for walls and roofing, but a definite attempt has been made, particularly in roof construction, to simplify the normal building processes. It must be stated, however, that the long span of the rafters should have been broken across the living space and not only across the bedroom area. The suggested heavy timber fascias, while a desirable refinement, are exaggerated in size, and extravagant in cost. The same extravagance may be noted in the single pane sections of over-large steel windows, and the gum-pole flooring, which is by no means inexpensive if properly carried out. Taking these factors into account, the estimated cost of £470 is low, but even so, would need to be reduced in actuality. Amenities provided are inadequate compared with those of the first two premiated designs.

Site planning, though not an essential part of the programme, has been brilliantly handled within the limitations imposed. The integration of structure and plan, and the skilful placing of house on site, together constitute a positive contribution in the field of sub-economic housing. Faults in plan and excessive size account for the placing of this scheme below Nos. 16 and 35.

* * *

GENERAL :

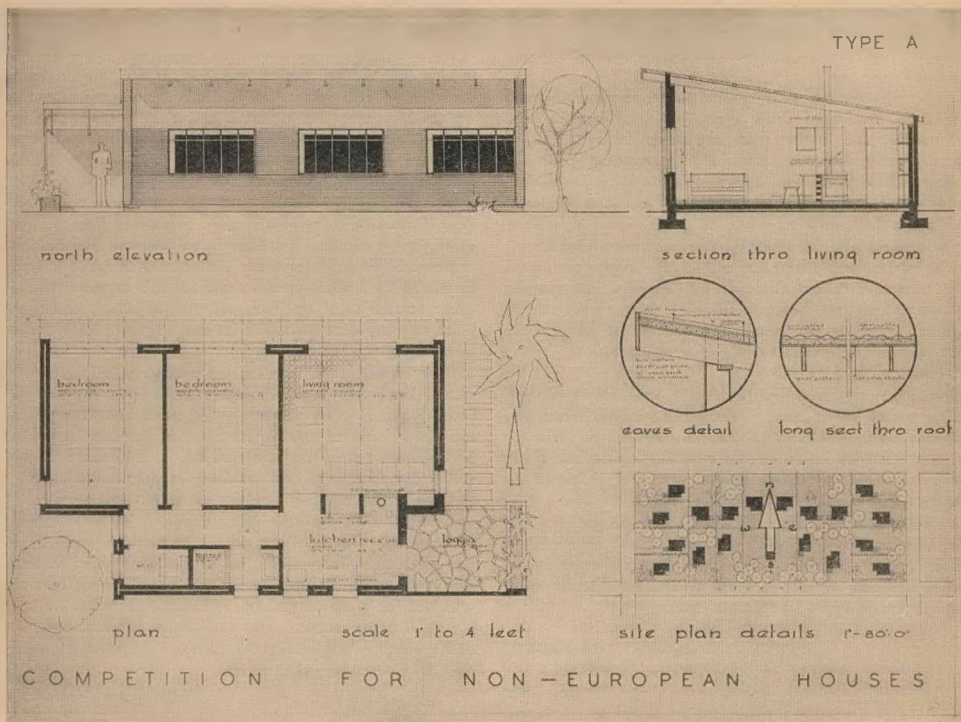
A few other schemes show competence and even originality in planning or construction. Reference to the outline given earlier of the Assessors' approach to the problem will indicate reasons in general terms for the rejection of these schemes, and it is not possible to enter here into any detailed criticism. A few words, however, may be said of the more noteworthy of the non-premiated designs.

Nos. 28 AND 29 :

Amongst the better examples of irregular planning, with wings articulated by means of a low-ceilinged link. The apparently low floor area is gained partly by the reduction in wall thickness (externally 6 ins.). The plan, though it functions well, entails a heavy increase in external walling. The latter is 6 in. mass concrete uninsulated and with no applied finish. The Assessors do not consider this acceptable, either from the point of view of living conditions, or of satisfactory production on the site. The architectural treatment is raw in the extreme, and the estimate optimistic.

No. 38 :

An enlarged version of the third premiated design, No. 35. In some ways superior in plan to No. 35, but a certain bogginess accounts for the unwarranted increase in area.



No. 15. THIRD PREMIATED DESIGN. Cowin and Ellis, of Johannesburg

No. 40:

A system of construction new to South Africa is suggested in this scheme. The steel frame, which is based on a United States patent, is relatively complicated, particularly for production in this country. Such proposals would have little hope of fulfilment within a reasonably short period. The claim is made that most of the structure is demountable. Though this may be true, it is a fact that of the total of 105 ft. of external walling, 48 ft. is 6 in. mass concrete, in itself unsatisfactory as an insulating material. It would be difficult to justify the roof shape, architecturally, or as it affects the second bedroom and the services placed against the rear wall. The living space is awkward in use zoning, circulation and cross-ventilation.

No. 48:

This is one of the best presented schemes, and possesses architectural merit both in general and in detail. The floor area is exceptionally low—671 square feet—but this probably is accounted for in the inadequate and unsatisfactory planning of the bathing facilities and of the future W.C. There is no second external door, which in this case would be doubly necessary. An attempt has been made to standardise construction, by evolving pre-cast vibrated concrete units, used in various ways

for different functions. Although this method, with all its difficulties in practice, has attractive possibilities, it cannot be said that this scheme propounds a consistent case for its adoption. In fact, a mixed construction is indicated, and no major benefits claimed for the partial pre-fabrication in larger units of certain elements of construction. The efficiency of those external walls, which are built entirely of pre-cast wall panels, may be questioned, the infilling being of dubious quality. Particularly to be commended or noted are the simple roof and ceiling construction, the suspended pre-cast floor panels, and the standardised cupboard, window and partition panels. The estimate given rather fairly reflects the initial and perhaps subsequent cost of extended pre-fabrication at the present stage of industrial development in South Africa.

TYPE "B":

No award has been made in this section of the competition. The Assessors do not consider that any one design reached the required standard, which is that laid down in general terms in the first part of this Report. Only a slight falling

off in quality in the better designs brought the standard below that which can with confidence be recommended to the City Council. One design, however, merits the attention of the promoters—No. 16.

This competitor's approach to the problem has already been extensively considered under Type "A." It is both bold and realistic, and, in that sense, the design for Type "B" is almost equally successful (area 797 square feet, external walling 115 feet). The drawbacks in the smaller house design, however, are carried over into the larger, with one additional and serious fault in plan. In making a comparison, it must be held against this scheme that there has been no commensurate increase in living space; in fact, the leisure portion of this use zone, 9 ft. in width, is far less effective, and must be deemed entirely inadequate. This basic fault in plan, though it does not vitiate the many good qualities of the scheme, does place it just outside the range of an award.

GENERAL :

The qualities (and defects) shown in the designs for the smaller houses are frequently reflected in those for the larger. This may be said of Nos. 1, 9, 27, 36, 39 and 48. No. 15, however, changes to an articulated plan, in itself of great merit, but unrelated to the special nature of sub-economic housing. The floor area is excessive (997 square feet), while the external walling shows an inevitable increase (almost 50%) over that required by No. 16. The excess floor area may be almost completely attributed to the incorporation of a full-size kitchen and an over-generous living room. In all other respects this plan is an admirable one.

Signed :

NORMAN HANSON,
W. G. TOMKYNS,
Assessors.

ADDENDUM TO ASSESSORS' REPORT :

The competition as a whole has shown that improvements in low-cost house design and construction are possible, especially if the houses are considered as architectural as well as structural and economic problems. That the City Council actually promoted such a competition amongst architects is the clearest indication of a realisation of this fact. Even if the results are not as striking as might have been anticipated, much that is of value has been submitted. And it must be remembered that a large section of the profession—a section most likely to be intensely interested in problems of the sort presented—is now away on active service. Even with the limited success achieved, it is apparent that a closer association of architects with the projected housing on which so many local authorities are now engaged should prove to be highly productive.

Three further steps, however, are needed to ensure fruitful results. The first is the experimental construction of the selected house types; in every respect, architectural as well as structural, only research and experiment can establish the value of departures from the conventional. The second is the active co-operation of the architect in the preparation for, and the actual carrying out of, premiated designs; without such co-operation a proper interpretation of the plans cannot be expected. The third is a greater emphasis on imaginative site planning, without which no large-scale housing scheme can avoid monotony and dreariness; here again, the groundwork must be prepared through, and realisation brought about by, architectural means. The architectural profession will no doubt welcome and support any action on these lines which the City Council may elect to take.

NORMAN HANSON.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN ACADEMY

The South African Academy—perhaps inevitably with an exhibition of this sort—has always aroused a certain amount of controversy, but this year criticism seemed to canalise itself in one particular direction, finding a very positive voice in a public lecture delivered by Mr. Northcliffe at the Art Gallery during the run of the exhibition, in which he complained that the South African Academy should not rightly be called either "South African" or an Academy.

There is no doubt, as Mr. Northcliffe observed, that the title of the annual exhibition does lead many members of the public to expect to see work representative of all the better-known artists in the country, and it is safe to conclude that a great deal, if not all, of the criticism directed at the organisers of the exhibition results from the disappointment of not seeing these representative works. Mr. Hendriks' explanation that well-known painters and sculptors felt that nothing would be added to their stature by exhibiting here was taken by some members of the public to prove the poor credentials of the South African Academy, and particularly, it was suggested, of the secret jury, since it was felt that no-one of repute would care to have work judged by an anonymous group.

It has been stressed that the jury of the South African Academy is selected not only for integrity but for broad-mindedness—sometimes very awkward bedfellows when it comes to a judgment of values. One must not underestimate the difficulty of any judgments arrived at within the limitations implied by a jury system, but the exhibition this year did seem to point to the failure of an attempt to satisfy too many points of view. So many differences in "taste" are catered for that only the most confirmed eclectic could have hoped to find more than a few paintings that pleased him. There was a general feeling that if the work had represented South African art as a whole one would not have minded liking only a little of it. Some of the prevailing dissatisfaction was obviously due to not knowing precisely what it did represent. There is at least an element of reasonableness in this public attitude, which might make it worth the while of the Committee to consider the possibility of reconstituting the Academy on a national scale, perhaps even along the general lines suggested by Mr. Northcliffe.

Apart from this general—but perhaps fundamental—disapproval, one had the feeling that the exhibition was better than that of last year; more compact, less ragged, and with fewer than usual obvious blunders in judgment.

Though some painters whose work we would like to have seen were not represented, there were also many equally well-known artists we were relieved to do without; there was a certain element of briskness about the show, as though a lot of cobwebs had been brushed away. The water-colours seemed particularly crisp this year, so that one is persuaded to break with tradition and discuss these first.

A confident acceptance of a new idiom marked several of the finer water-colours, notably Marlyn Evans' "The Church," a straightforward but sensitive study, controlled, delicate and precise, and the two paintings of A. W. Ewan, "Windy Landscape" and "Dawn on Devastation, Liverpool"; the latter, particularly, showed a witty gouache technique, the overall effect of matt pinks and lilacs being handled with a vigorous mastery rarely met with at local exhibitions. Walter Battiss presented "The Pool, Struben's Farm," with his usual lyrical verve, light touch, and a restrained acceptance of the translucent possibilities of his medium. H. Schlamm gave a dramatic rendering of his "Golden City Street" by using blacks and greys with refreshing sharpness against touches of red and red-brown. An architect's sensitivity to structural form was revealed in the massed planes and juxtaposition of light and dark tones of John Fassler's "Engineer Training Camp, Spitzkop." Throughout the water-colour section one felt a sincere appreciation of the qualities inherent in the medium, from the traditional brilliant transparency of K. M. Wright's "The Gig," the fresh touch of Herbert E. Perring's "Studio Doorway," or Diedrick's "Country Lane" and "Trees near Faure," to the more opaque massing of May Arlington's "City Pavements," and A. Savile Davis' "Scala Pallonetta, Naples." Siegfried Hahn's "Eerste River, Stellenbosch," Wellesley Baily's "Sunshine, Gardens, Cape Town," Nerine Desmond's "Mamre," and W. Parker's "Italian Landscape," were all pleasing if conventional studies. "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" of Marguerite Brown seemed out of place among the oils, where its gouache and line technique seemed too slight. Its interesting design would have been read more easily among the other water-colours.

It was difficult to accept the oils as readily as one could the water-colours. Apart from a general impression of competence, there were few paintings that gave assurance of much significance. One expects greater profundity in the more massive medium than is usual in water-colour, and this was not a quality of the great majority of works shown. Of the portraits, only the "Sangiro" of P. Anton Hendriks seemed to offer anything beyond the bare "likeness" of run-of-the-mill portraiture.

One of the more encouraging aspects of the exhibition, however, was the evidence of a more active interest in figure studies. Among these Sheila Cussons' "Tamilian Ritual" immediately caught the eye with its controlled, deliberate colour and remote rhythm. A sense both of surface pattern and three-dimensional form was shown by Mary Davies in her "Dressing Room," a brilliant interweaving of colours with flashes of white, pink and blue. Other interesting figure groups were Dezzo Koenig's "Ward Scene in 106, S.A.G.H., Egypt," a linear vigorous drawing with extreme unity of colour, and Mary Vaughan-Williams' pastel, "Shrimpers."

The rest of the oils were chiefly landscapes, still life, and flower pieces. Siegfried Hahn, O. J. Fleck, and Douglas Portway deserve mention for their fresh, direct studies; while Hanns Ebenstein's "Hotel Room," Walter Battiss' "Child with Orange," and P. Anton Hendriks' "Oranges and Grape-fruit" revealed a more than usual technical ability and feeling for medium. A welcome change was indicated in several paintings, from the prevalent impressionism and near-impressionisms to an increased consciousness of structure, particularly in Joyce Leonard's "Canna" and "Ameshoff Street," both revealing a positive approach and sureness of touch, weighty in the first and delicate in the second.

It was difficult to pass Merlin Evans' "The Women at the Well," and equally difficult to assess it. He is a technical virtuoso with a mastery of colour, and in this example of his work the play of light and dark over the whole canvas was immediately arresting. On reflection, it seemed that his breaking up of surfaces was too destructive,

particularly in view of his retention of a referential title for the piece.

Of the sculpture exhibited this year very little can be said. A prevalence of bronze portraiture, however competent, seems to argue not only imaginative sterility, but a misinterpretation of the true medium of the sculptor. An appropriate solidity was shown in Herman Wald's "Russian Girl," and Thomas Masekela's "The Beggar" was a humorous but comprehending interpretation. Lippy Lipschitz's "Sea Nude" aroused some interest, but disappeared mysteriously before the close of the exhibition.

The architectural section had received far more support than in previous years, and included one or two striking renderings, a particularly brilliant revelation of the character of the building being given by J. de Bruyn in the "Bolt Factory" of Cowan and Ellis; R. L. Niebuhr showed the glistening precision of the building in "Hermann Court" of the same firm; P. Franklin gave an exuberant landscape setting of the "House at Windsor," and D. Turgel presented a striking gouache rendering of the "Angus Mansions," both of G. Davids.

It is to be hoped that any change in the policy of the Committee of the South African Academy would not take away the present opportunity for still unknown painters to exhibit their work. If the constitution of an Academy on a national scale tended to do this, perhaps the Institute of Architects would retain the necessary machinery for an annual "Summer Show" of younger talent?

HEATHER MARTIENSEN.

TOWN PLANNING ASSOCIATION (TRANSCAAL)

REPORT OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING HELD AT KELVIN HOUSE, JOHANNESBURG, ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6th 1944

This meeting, which was held to launch the resuscitated Town Planning Association of the Transvaal, was well attended by representatives of various public bodies and many private individuals interested in the objects of the Association.

The President, Professor G. E. Pearse, delivered an address to the meeting as follows:—

It is my pleasant duty this afternoon to welcome you on behalf of the Council to the inaugural meeting of the Town Planning Association.

We are particularly pleased to have with us His Worship the Mayor, who I know has displayed a very keen interest in town planning matters, and particularly those aspects of the

subject which affect the City of Johannesburg. As we all know Johannesburg is in a sorry plight to-day with its problems of lack of open spaces, traffic, the railway station, its housing and its slums, and we should like to assure the Mayor, and through him the City Council, of our earnest endeavour to assist in remedying these defects.

I also want to express our gratitude to Dr. Bernard Price, Vice-President of the Associated Scientific and Technical Societies for so kindly coming along and, through him, to thank the Associated Societies for so generously allowing us the use of this hall.

The President, Dr. Dobson, was to have been here, but had to attend a conference at Bloemfontein.

We also have with us distinguished representatives of Government, Provincial and Local Authorities and national societies, including members of Parliament, members of the Provincial Council and City and Town Councils, to all of whom I would like to extend a hearty welcome.

We are glad to welcome representatives of the Universities of Pretoria and the Witwatersrand, in the persons of Professor A. L. Meiring, Head of the Department of Architecture, Pretoria, and Principal Raikes, of Witwatersrand University.

That the public of South Africa is keenly interested in town planning is proved by the very large numbers who have already joined the Association. The Johannesburg Publicity Association, representing, I believe, some 50 public bodies, has nominated its Director as a member of our Council, and the professors of Architecture, Land Surveying and Medicine have appointed their representatives to form the nucleus of the Council under the Constitution.

We have had many congratulatory letters and a telegram from the Cape Association, welcoming the formation of the new body.

Before referring to the aims and objects of the newly-constituted Association, I should like, very briefly, to say something about the work done by the original association in the past. The Town Planning Association (Transvaal) was established in 1919, chiefly at the instigation of the late Mr. Colin Wade, who was its first President.

His earnest and enlightened desire for the application of town planning principles, both to existing townships and to new layouts, made him a most valuable member of the Association.

Associated with him in this respect was the late Senator John Ware, who had interested himself in town planning during his visits to Australia.

The first Executive Committee consisted of Messrs. B. W. Brayshaw, D. M. Burton, Wilfrid Fernhead, G. W. Heardman, J. Walton Jameson, T. N. Leslie, H. G. Nicolson, W. H. A. Pritchard, John Taylor, W. G. van der Steer, H. G. Veale, E. H. Waugh, Major J. W. O'Hara, Mrs. P. B. Lys, with Mr. Ralph Robson as Hon. Secretary.

To these pioneers the Association and the public in general are deeply indebted for their untiring efforts.

The first conference and exhibition was held at the South African School of Mines and Technology, now the University, in May, 1919. This was opened by the Administrator of the Transvaal, Mr. A. G. Robertson, supported by the Mayor of Johannesburg, Mr. T. F. Allen, and the then Principal, Mr. J. H. Hofmeyr.

Papers were read by distinguished leaders in the professional and scientific world.

From its inception the Association worked strenuously to achieve its objects, and was strongly supported by various professional societies and by the leading municipalities in the Transvaal, more especially by the Municipal Council of Johannesburg.

The Association, on many occasions, was invited by Government, Provincial and Municipal authorities to advise on matters connected with Town Planning.

Plans of all projected extensions to existing towns and new layouts were submitted by the Townships Board to the Association for criticism. These criticisms, in most instances, were acted upon by the Board, which warmly appreciated the work of the Association in this respect. At the request of the Secretary for Public Health, draft Union Town Planning Regulations were drawn up to guide local authorities in Town Planning matters.

Conferences were held from time to time and collected papers were published.

I should like to pay a tribute to one or two outstanding members of the Association who did so much to create public interest in its activities:

The late Dr. Charles Porter, who, as Johannesburg's Medical Officer of Health, drew attention to the appalling state of our slum areas, and did so much to make Johannesburg one of the healthiest cities in the world.

The late Mr. T. S. Fitzimons, Town Engineer of Boksburg, prepared schemes for the improvement of Johannesburg, particularly in connection with the siting of the railway. If these schemes had been carried out, the enormous cost of lowering the line and building new stations would have been obviated, the ratepayers would have been saved thousands of pounds, and Johannesburg would have been made worthy of its title of city. Vested interests, however, prevented their being carried out at the time.

The late Mr. B. W. Brayshaw, whose land surveying experience was of inestimable value to the Association.

The late Mr. Andrew Allen, who, as an amateur town planner, displayed boundless energy and prepared many schemes which aroused public interest. He was the first to advocate a large reclamation scheme for Cape Town, and the late Mr. G. S. Burt Andrews, who, as City Engineer, co-operated wholeheartedly in all proposals put forward by the Association.

Through the efforts of these and other members of the Association, the Transvaal Townships Ordinance of 1931 and the Slums Act of 1925 were passed.

The Association or its individual members always took a live interest in any important changes or developments in the leading towns in the Transvaal, and endeavoured to prevent errors being made which might lead to heavy expenditure in the future.

In 1937 it was felt that, in view of the appointment of Town Planning Committees in Pretoria, Johannesburg and the Reef towns, and also the appointment of Regional Planners for Pretoria and the Reef areas, the scope of this Association had been considerably narrowed, in fact, it had achieved its objects, and it was consequently dissolved.

* * *

Great changes have taken place in our land since that time. Populations have increased, industries have been developed, and increase in road transport has raised serious problems in our towns.

During the past year the question of post-war reconstruction and its effect on South Africa has exercised the minds of Government and Local Authorities, public bodies and laymen.

The Social and Economic Planning Council, in its first report, put forward recommendations dealing with such problems as regional and town planning and housing.

It is obvious from their report that the physical aspects of our country require investigation and careful consideration to prevent the haphazard development and consequent disfigurement of rural areas in the vicinity of our towns and the preservation of the countryside from ruthless destruction. The Town Planning Association of the Cape Province, like its sister body in the Transvaal, has done and is doing magnificent work. The towns of the Western Province are responding to its propaganda, and some of them are determined to act at once and save the heritage handed down to them by the early settlers in South Africa.

The Cape Association approached ex-members of this body in April of this year, and urged us to reconstitute the Transvaal Association and join with them in forming a national body in an endeavour to check the ravages of speculation and destruction of the countryside throughout the Union.

As a result it was decided, as a first step, to reconstitute the Transvaal Association and to appeal to the public to support it. This meeting has, therefore, been called, and I have great pleasure in announcing that it has the fullest support of the Hon. J. H. Hofmeyr, Minister of Finance and Education, and the Hon. S. F. Waterson, Minister of Economic Development.

We have also received the active support of several municipalities in the Transvaal, and there is little doubt that others will follow suit.

It now remains for me to say something about the Association and its objects.

In the first place, it has been decided to change the title and to recommend that it be called the Town and Country Planning Association. Our membership, which is open to anyone interested, includes representatives of the Architectural, Civil Engineering, Medical, Land Surveying, Legal, and Town Planning professions, men who are willing to co-operate in all matters concerning town and country planning and are prepared to advise on all questions put up to them by local or other authorities or public bodies.

I should, however, like to point out that the Association is a propaganda and advisory body, and that it has no intention whatsoever of interfering with the activities of members of any professional society whose work is associated with any branch of town and country planning.

In the past we have had few experts in this country to advise on such questions as regional and town planning and housing, but to-day we have professional town planners and a

large number of young men trained in overseas and South African Universities who have made a close study of social and economic problems relating to these subjects, and others who have made a specialised study of housing problems in this country and overseas.

We feel, therefore, that we are in a better position to interest and guide the public than in the past and to initiate a series of public lectures and conferences on all problems concerning the physical structure of our land.

The objects of the Association are:

- (a) To advance the study of town and country planning, civic design, housing and kindred subjects, and of the arts and sciences as applied to those subjects.
- (b) To promote the artistic and scientific development and the improvement of towns, villages and urban areas.
- (c) To promote measures for the elimination of slums and the improvement of the housing conditions of the people.
- (d) To secure the co-operation and association of those engaged or interested in town and country planning and housing and in the objects of the Association.
- (e) To further the knowledge of town and country planning and housing and the teaching of any subject relating thereto by lectures, pamphlets or any other means.
- (f) To consider all questions affecting town and country planning and the improvement of civic design and housing, and to initiate and watch legislation, and (if necessary) approach Parliament, Provincial or Municipal Councils, by petition or deputation in relation to measures affecting town and country planning and kindred subjects, and to promote changes of and amendments in the law and the administration of the law relating to or affecting housing, town and country planning and the control of building.
- (g) To hold conferences or meetings for the discussion and exchange of views on matters affecting town and country planning, civic design and improvement, the reading of papers and the delivery of lectures; to hold congresses or exhibitions (either jointly with any other body or institution or not) for the exposition of any matters affecting or relating to the practice or theory of town or country planning or any allied subject, and to arrange for the publication of the proceedings and lectures of the Association.
- (h) To form or acquire by purchase, donation, bequest or otherwise a library and collection of maps, models, drawings, designs or other material, and to maintain, extend and improve the same.

* * *

Finally, I should like to refer to a few matters which I feel should be given the most careful consideration by the public in this Province, and which will be the first concern of our Association.

1. RAILWAYS.

One of the biggest problems facing our larger towns to-day is that of the railways, which, owing to unfortunate siting in the early days, form serious obstructions to our ever-increasing traffic. The City Council of Cape Town has twice unanimously rejected the railway scheme in connection with the new foreshore development.

The citizens of Johannesburg have been threatened that if they do not accept the railway scheme, Johannesburg Station will be made a second Jeppe.

These two instances are sufficient to indicate the need of enlightening public opinion on matters which are essentially technical but affect the larger questions of town planning and civic art.

2. NATIONAL ROADS.

A body such as this could assist the National Roads Board in protecting the main arteries of the country from becoming disfigured by such things as unsightly advertisements, badly designed buildings, destruction of indigenous trees, beauty spots, etc. The approaches to our towns leave much to be desired, and some effort should be made to improve these.

3. TOWN PLANNING.

Councillor Mincer, of the Johannesburg City Council, has put up an excellent case for the need of reviewing our many town planning schemes. This action of his deserves the wholehearted support of the community. The points he has made would have the strongest support from our Association, and it would be prepared to give advice to smaller municipalities—and village councils—which may lack the necessary technical staffs to solve their problems.

4. HOUSING.

The whole question of housing, whether European, Non-European or Native, and its siting, requires the most careful consideration before a final step is taken, and an association such as this would be invaluable in advising Government and Local Authorities on all aspects of the problem. One would not like to see military camps on a larger scale springing up in the vicinity of our towns.

5. SCENERY.

The need for preserving the scenic beauties of our Province should be supported by everyone. Much can be done now to prevent the ravages of the past and to prevent our few large areas of water and our indigenous forests from being destroyed by the haphazard developments going on around them, and by soil erosion. Those are just a few points worthy of consideration. Our slogan in this Province should be "Save the Transvaal, see that its development is such that a healthy and attractive environment is possible for all classes of the community, that it can become a tourist centre, and see, too, that tourists are properly catered for if they can be induced to come here."

If the various town planning associations are united in a national town and country planning body, much more can be achieved and, we hope, a greater public interest awakened in the development of this great land of ours.

The Town and Country Planning Association of Great Britain has worked wonders in that country. Their delightful pamphlets are well-known to most of you. We in this country have greater opportunities, as our development is not yet so intense as it is over there, and the countryside can still be saved. I appeal, therefore, to all of you to assist in doing this by joining the Association and getting others to do so.

At the conclusion of his address, the President invited the Mayor of Johannesburg to address the meeting.

The Mayor, Councillor A. S. Holland, in addressing the meeting, stressed that although he was by means a town planning expert, he had listened with considerable interest to the President's address, and had also been greatly impressed by Councillor Mincer's report on town planning. He hoped and believed that in the resuscitation of the Town Planning Association a ship was being launched that would sail a very long distance and time.

An assurance was given by the Mayor that the Association would be particularly supported by the Johannesburg Municipality, for the need for such an Association was a thousand times greater now than when it was originally constituted in 1919. The only pity was that it had been allowed to lapse for seven years. He felt that the younger generation of town planners in Johannesburg would be of great assistance in the development of the City, and that the City's Town Planning Consultant, Colonel Bowling, would not be a voice in the wilderness. The objects of the Association were heartily approved, for the questions of the siting of railways and roads, of housing and the preservation of scenic beauties were of vast importance. The City owed a great debt of gratitude to Councillor Mincer, whose valuable report had introduced a refreshing breeze into the Town Planning Committee of the City Council.

In referring to Councillor Mincer's report, the Mayor stressed the need for open spaces and sites for places of worship. Owing to congestion in the City, industrialists were being driven away to other centres, and although somewhat dubious about mentioning the traffic problem, the Mayor referred to the pressing need of relieving in some way the considerable congestion of traffic in the City's streets.

The Mayor then mentioned that the Council's regulations were in many instances not observed, and that the zoning laws were all too frequently transgressed. He felt that the only solution of this difficulty would be the strictest prosecution of flagrant breaches of the regulations. He felt that a considerable service to the city would be achieved by the creation in the Council of a sub-committee consisting of all the Chairmen of Committees.

In conclusion, the Mayor, on behalf of the City Council, wished the resuscitated Association every success, and indicated his sincere belief that it would grow from strength to strength.

Dr. Bernard Price, Vice-President of the Associated Scientific and Technical Societies, at the invitation of the President, addressed the meeting as follows:—

Mr. Mayor, Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I desire to thank you sincerely, Mr. President, for the opportunity you have so kindly afforded me as Vice-President of the Associated Scientific and Technical Societies, to be present here to-day, so that I may offer you and your Association the congratulations and best wishes of my Association. The Societies I represent are very gratified to see the steps you are taking to reconstruct the body which rendered such excellent service from 1919 to 1937.

Colonel Dobson, the President of the Associated Societies, has asked me to apologise for his absence this afternoon. An important engagement elsewhere made it quite impossible for him to attend, but I can assure you that he is wholeheartedly in support of the objects for which your Association is being reconstructed, and regrets very much his inability to be present.

Town and country planning is a matter of interest to each one of us as citizens, and perhaps especially to members of the scientific and technical professions who in their daily work are concerned with various aspects of the diverse problems involved. The members of the constituent societies of my Association are, therefore, wholeheartedly in support of the steps you are now taking, and hope that the reconstituted Association will have a very successful future.

This matter of town and country planning is perhaps one which appeals specially to the youth of the country, whose outlook is naturally more imaginative and virile than that of their elders. It is to the younger generation that we must look to bring the enthusiasm and enterprise of youth to bear upon these problems.

I remember the excellent exhibition which students of the Department of Architecture at the University organised some months ago and the stimulating suggestions that were made by these youthful enthusiasts.

Mr. President, I do not wish to detain you with more than a few words, but there is one point to which I would like specially to refer. You have, as is evidenced by the change in the name of your Association, decided to broaden the field of interest beyond that of town planning in its narrower sense. This is, I think, a very wise step, and I would like to emphasise the importance of regional planning and the need for regional surveys to provide the data essential as the foundation for country and regional planning.

This opens up a very wide field. The whole question of land use and the control of such use is involved. Let me read you a quotation from a recent White Paper issued by the British Government on this subject which will serve to illustrate the point I am making.

"New houses, whether of permanent or emergency construction; the new lay-out of areas devastated by enemy action or blighted by reason of age or bad living conditions; the new schools which will be required under the Education Bill . . . ; the balanced distribution of industry which the Government's recently published proposals for maintaining active employment envisage; the requirements of sound nutrition and of a healthy and well-balanced agriculture; the preservation of land for national parks and forests, and the assurance to the people of enjoyment of the sea and countryside in times of leisure; a new and safer highway system better adapted to industrial and other needs; the proper provision of air-fields—all these related parts of a single reconstruction programme involve the use of land, and it is essential that their various claims on land should be so harmonised as to ensure for the people of this country the greatest possible measure of individual well-being and national prosperity."

Mr. President, it will be agreed, I think, that effective town planning cannot be dissociated from regional planning. The underlying problem is to control the use to which land is put in order to ensure its best utilisation in the public interest or to put it even more concisely—the best functional allocation of land amongst all competing uses.

The Social and Economic Planning Council, of which I am a member, has given and continues to give its attention to this important matter, and will be issuing before long a report on regional and town planning. I should like, if I may, to extend to your Association the good wishes of the Planning Council and to assure you that the Council welcomes the steps you are taking to resume activities, and is glad to know that your Association will be helping to educate public opinion and arouse public interest in this most important field.

In your address, Mr. President, you expressed the hope that the various Town Planning Associations would unite into a national town and country planning body. I feel sure that such a national body would be able to achieve much, and I trust that such a combination will prove possible.

Again let me thank you, Mr. President, for the invitation you kindly extended to the Associated Scientific and Technical Societies to be represented here this afternoon, and to wish your Association, on their behalf, every success in its endeavours to further the interests of regional and town planning.

The proceedings concluded with a vote of thanks to the Mayor and Dr. Price, which was proposed by the Vice-President, Mr. F. K. Webber.

THE STUDENTS' FORUM

A MEMORIAL TO THOSE WHO FOUGHT IN THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

By Michael Smith, B.Arch. V. University of the Witwatersrand.

The young men who fought and died so gallantly in the Battle of Britain were concerned with the preservation of a heritage that might serve as the foundation for the building of a better world. It was not their habit to speak much about this, and it may be that most of them did not fully perceive the things for which they fought, for their's was a life too crowded with the urgent business of fighting to permit of questions, and for the most part, they knew secretly, that there was—to use their own phrase—"no future in it." They were, therefore, reticent—finding expression in the poignant ecstasy of flight rather than in words. They were peaceful men, desiring neither to kill or be killed; and fighting only when peaceful means had failed. Yet, in the fullness of youth, they offered themselves without cavil to death, that out of their sacrifices those that came after them might live more fully.

How, then, can we honour them, dead, that asked so little of us when they lived—and who gave so much? For they were modest, seeking neither material reward nor recognition. They did not ask for honour, deeming it sufficient to perform the task allotted to them with a craftsman's pride in the doing of it. It would be enough for them to know that they did not die in vain—that we who remain are not forgetful of them nor of that task that they undertook and, in the agony of death, were forced to lay down. This, then, will be their true memorial. It will lie in our hearts and hands—in our determination to construct with these our instruments such a world that the air will be for ever free for the delight and the lawful traffic of mankind, and never again darkened by the steel hail of war. Only when we, resting from this labour, can say of them—as it was once said of Sir Christopher Wren—"Si monumentum requiris, circumspice!", will their memorial be complete—and our own survival justified.

There is a saying that death is fastidious, choosing none but the best. These men were the flower of our generation

—and we unworthy to have outlived them. It is a heavy task that faces us, bereft of their company to cheer us, and their counsel as guide. For how little it is that memory retains! There is nothing left to us but transient images flickering across the dark camera of the mind—mere nostalgic glimpses of happiness and laughter, of kindness, of manly courage and strong determination. Let us therefore by all means construct for ourselves shrines and monuments and marshal the pomp and splendour of the State in formal ceremonies so that we may in these places and at certain times recapture for a few brief moments our memories of those that are dead. It is good that we should have our sacred places wherein we can remember and breathe again something of the spirit that animated them, and return to our labour refreshed and re-dedicated.

* * *

It will be the arduous task of the artist or architect responsible for such a memorial to capture something of that spirit—that fine unconquerable will that enabled the people of Britain to emerge victorious from the dark trial of 1940—and to do so in a manner acceptable to as many people as possible. For it is not enough, in a work of this kind, for the artist to express his private conviction; he must rather seek to embody something of the aspirations of every pilgrim that may visit the shrine. If he is to succeed he must be influenced not by aesthetic considerations only, but by the innumerable quirks and peculiarities of the national character.

It may be justly said that the English have no affection or regard for the monumental—that they remain obstinately unimpressed by considerations of mere size. They have certainly made few attempts to record in monumental stone and on any considerable scale significant events in their history. I can recall scarcely one that has proved an unqualified success. Just as it has been remarked that the Spanish language is greater than its literature, one might

This study was suggested by the statement published in "The Illustrated London News" that the Eastern Apsidal Chapel of the Henry VII Chapel, Westminster Abbey, had been offered by the Dean and Chapter as a lasting memorial to those who fought in the Battle of Britain. This Chapel, originally intended by Henry VII as a shrine for Henry VI, will become the shrine of heroes, and will contain a Roll of Honour, now in preparation.—Editors.

say with some accuracy that English institutions possess a unique significance that rarely finds a counterpart in their architecture. The English genius does not, in fact, run to the magnificent in architecture, but is more happily seen on a modest scale, in buildings "habitable and adorning life." Grandiloquent expressions of national feeling are alien to the English tradition, and are only too apt to be regarded by succeeding generations in the light of skeletons in the national cupboard—to be concealed, or, where this is impossible, to be dismissed with a gesture of embarrassed apology. Thus, while it is true that our forefathers did once erect a Blenheim, they had the tact to conceal it in the depths of Oxfordshire thinly camouflaged as a gentleman's residence—a discretion sadly lacking in the age that inflicted the Albert Memorial upon us. Although there is much that we have missed (compare the approach to St. Paul's from Ludgate Hill with Bernini's piazza before St. Peter's), we have also been spared a great deal, for not even our Victorian ancestors sank so low as that unhappy generation of Romans who defaced the Capitoline Hill with that monstrous denture-like erection of white marble—the Victor Emmanuel Monument.

Apart from this matter of scale, it is not easy to draw any general conclusions about the English taste in monuments. For it must be admitted that the degree of esteem—or the reverse—in which the English hold their memorials is but little influenced by aesthetic considerations. Any catalogue of Probable Causes of National Embarrassment would be incomplete without mention of the Nelson Monument in Trafalgar Square, a long-established feature of the London scene, and one which, from its age and general inoffensiveness, might well have been expected to have sunk into that limbo of casual acceptance where repose most of the things with which we are thoroughly familiar. Yet it was the cause of a heated dispute, but recently concluded (although I seem to remember it raging in my childhood), in the august columns of "The Times." The controversy hinged upon a fine point in zoology—whether, in fact, a lion lies, as shown by Landseer, with his forelegs outstretched and paws flat upon the ground, or with the paws curling inwards. There were, doubtless, scenes of relief and mafficking in far-flung outposts of Empire when the "Illustrated London News" weighed into the conflict with photographic evidence to prove that Sir Edwin may have been right after all. It was as if a dark cloud had been lifted from the reputation of London herself, to enable Englishmen to hold their heads high amongst the peoples of the world, secure in the knowledge that their sculptors are not only great but accurate.

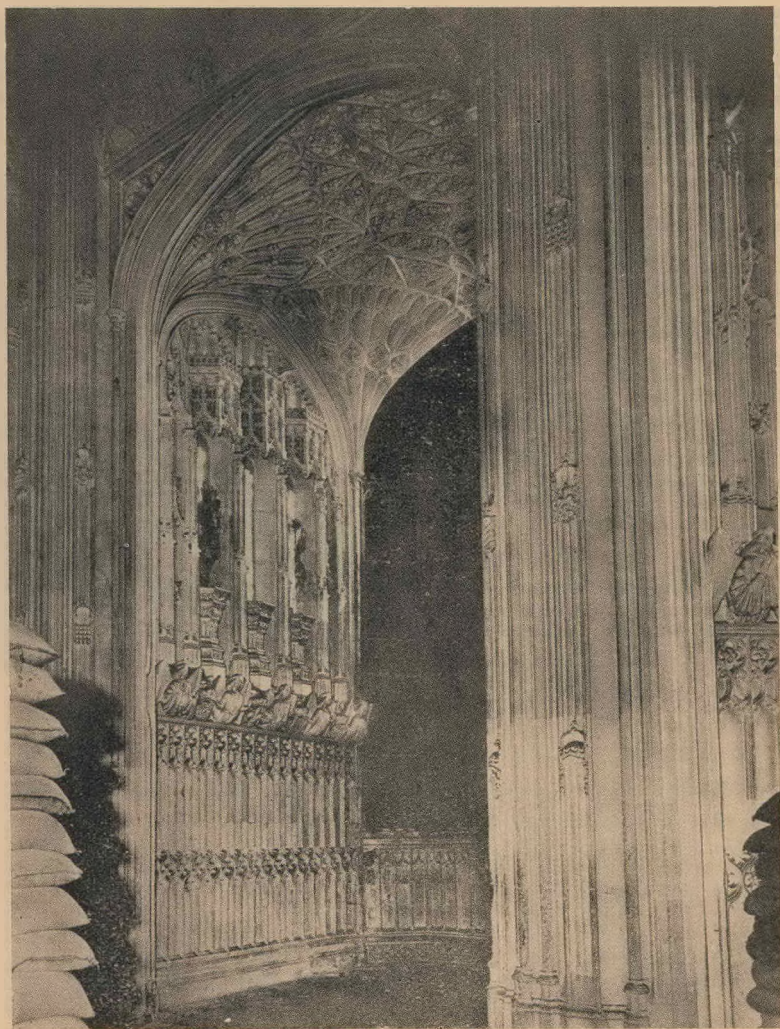
The uproar that attended the erection of a more recent monument in the best equestrian tradition—the Haig statue in Whitehall—has, to the best of my knowledge, not yet completely died away, and murmurs of alarm and indignation may probably still be heard emanating from the Cavalry Club to echo dismally down the corridors of the War Office. For is not the late Earl improperly dressed? Do not regulations explicitly state that a soldier—let alone a Field-Marshal

—is naked without his head-dress? Apart from this there was a great outcry amongst the multitude of horse-lovers who contended that the posture of the Marshal's charger was shamefully unnatural. Both parties agreed that the statue was, therefore, a bad one—and should instantly be removed or modified. But alas, for military etiquette and equine exactitude, the sculpture had apparently been paid for, the sculptor was adamant, and the memorial remains unchanged for the admiration of posterity.

It will, I think, appear, even from the foregoing superficial observations, that the erection of monuments in public places to the satisfaction of all classes of the community (such as that we are considering) is a difficult business at the best of times—and in England doubly so. The proposal put forward by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster—that a chapel within the Abbey should be set aside and furnished as a shrine to those who fought in the Battle of Britain—seems, therefore, to offer the ideal solution, for here the "atmosphere" is already present and the individual contribution of the artist reduced to a very minimum. For is not the fact that the Abbey still exists in itself a tribute to these heroes?

And, indeed, what a magnificent site it is for a memorial! The Abbey of Westminster, founded—according to some—in the seventh century, the scene for centuries of the coronation of our kings and the burial place of so many of them and of our famous men, is a veritable "history of our race set in stone." It lies at the very heart of the Empire in fitting partnership with that greatest of our institutions—the Houses of Parliament. Here, amongst these sacred stones and in the goody company of Chaucer and Shakespeare, Milton, Johnson and Handel, Clive, Wolfe and Livingstone, Chatham and Fox, Pitt, Disraeli and a whole host of others, together with the "Unknown Warrior" of the last war—here, surely, is the place where we may most properly pay homage to our latest dead.

The Eastern Apsidal Chapel which has been set aside for this high purpose forms part of the larger structure of the Chapel of Henry VII, and lies at the easternmost extremity of the Abbey. It was intended by its royal founder to serve as the shrine of Henry VI, but this project was never to be fulfilled. The chapel does not offer the architectural possibilities of a site in the nave, for it is small in extent and is masked from a distant view by the tomb of Henry VII, so that but the upper parts of its walls and the incomparably delicate vaulting of the ceiling are visible. There are, however, compensations. It is most fitting that this beautiful chapel, intended as the burial-place of a king, should now serve as a shrine for heroes. Consider, too, the effect on the pilgrim who, having entered by the western portals of the Abbey and viewed the long and magnificent procession of history that is unfolded in the walk up the nave, comes at last to his destination in the furthest and most intimate sanctuary of all. It is, perhaps, proper that the shrine itself should be modest and unassuming, for the most hallowed institutions in England seem to have in common a certain



GENERAL VIEW OF THE EASTERN APSIDAL CHAPEL OF THE HENRY VII CHAPEL, WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Reproduced with acknowledgments to "The Illustrated London News", Jan., 16, 1944.

modest and almost dingy quality—as if of cherished household possessions mellowed by time and familiar usage.

The shrine will therefore rely for its effect more upon its position and the associations of the building within which it stands, than upon any dramatic qualities in its design. Another memorial in the Abbey, similar in its function—that of the Unknown Warrior—is no more than a plain bronze tablet set in the stone flags of the nave, and, of all the monuments in that place, it is by far the most moving and impressive. Its very plainness leaves the mind of the spectator free, and as the eye wanders upwards to the soaring vault above, one feels that it is not merely a tomb set in a church, but that all this miraculous architecture and even the throbbing city beyond are but part and complement of this modest sepulchre.

I do not feel competent to suggest the form the memorial within the chapel should take. For myself, I do not feel that the engines of modern war, with all their hideous associations, would consort well with the timeless peace of this place, and I would accordingly prefer an allegorical treatment consisting, perhaps, or no more than the figure of a knight resting in the quiet sleep of death upon a simple podium of Portland stone, with the arms and proud motto of the Royal Air Force—"Per Ardua ad Astra"—graven upon his shield. Within the chapel might hang the banners of the Dominions, of France, Poland, Czechoslovakia and America as a tribute to the gallant men of those countries who fought by the side of the men of the Royal Air Force.

* * *

I have tried to express my feelings that the proposed shrine should be no more than a place set apart for meditation—a place where we may re-dedicate ourselves to the task of

constructing a more lasting tribute. As an immediate step towards our final goal, I would suggest that a Memorial Fund be established for the purchase of suitable ground on which to establish national parks and green belts. As the National Trust, in the country districts at least, to some extent perform this necessary service already, and we may hope that the setting up of regional authorities may extend the scope of the work, the new fund should devote its energies to the buying up of land in the cities, and preferably in those slum areas that have already been razed by bombing. In London, for instance, great tracts of slum in and around the docks have been devastated, while in the vicinity of St. Paul's whole blocks of warehouses and offices have been obliterated. We should try to ensure that as much of this ground as possible should remain open for ever, forming a nucleus of a chain of open spaces stretching through and round the poorest and most crowded areas. The fund should not, of course, buy up land piecemeal, but should work in conjunction with the various planning bodies with a view to providing assistance wherever it is most urgently needed.

I believe that the men whom we are seeking to honour would approve of this project, for they hated slums and squalor and the petty, selfish interests of those that smugly tolerated and profited from them. It was perhaps in disgust at such sordid things that they turned away to seek a new and cleaner kingdom in the continent of the air. Nevertheless, they loved the land for all its scars, and would often, relinquishing for a while the stern unnatural traffic of war, seek rest and solace in the beauty and permanence of it. They loved the rolling hills and cool pastureland, trees and the sparkle of the eastern sea in the early morning, and, if we can make these things the property of the poor and oppressed, they will be with us in the spirit.

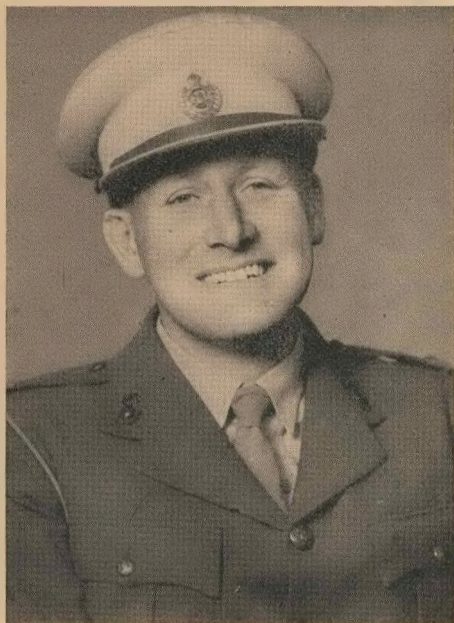


Photo: Constance Stuart.

AWARD OF MILITARY CROSS TO MAJOR C. E. TODD.

We are pleased to record the immediate award of the Military Cross to Major C. E. Todd, of Pretoria, an Officer in the South African Engineer Corps, for distinguished services in the field.

Major Todd is a member of the South African Institute of Architects, and was a popular member of the profession in Pretoria, where he was at one time employed by the Public Works Department, and was engaged in practice prior to his joining the Forces. He was an active member of the Pretoria Architectural Society and was a part-time lecturer in the Department of Architecture at the University of Pretoria, and for some years edited "Public Works in South Africa," the official organ of the Public Works Department.

Announcing the award to Major Todd, the citation says: "Commanding Cassino Task Force A, he personally reconnoitred Highway Six through Cassino, while mopping up was in progress, to get mines and booby traps cleared. Between the crypt and the Continental Hotel the road crossed a flooded swamp and was obliterated by heavy bomb craters filled with water. Its reconstruction involved the use of the largest concentration of mechanical equipment ever employed in battle.

This officer controlled the work day and night until its completion, and notwithstanding considerable shelling, no part of the job was at any time held up. It was due to the excellence of his planning and organisation, together with his inspiring leadership and personal courage throughout, that enabled Highway Six through Cassino to be opened to traffic in record time and contact maintained with the enemy."

("Star," Johannesburg, 2/9/44.)

Craftsmanship in War-Time

IT is at once a reflection of this country's fortunate situation and a tribute to the resources of its industry that, after almost five years of war, it is yet able to enjoy many of the services for which it normally depended upon imported materials and the conditions of peace.

DESPITE the preoccupation of the greater part of our organisation with essential services, the skilled craftsmanship and distinctive design associated with our name are still available for civilian work, albeit local and substitute materials must be employed together with the limited imported stocks remaining at our disposal.

THERE is no class of work for which the architectural and building world has been accustomed to look to us, which, consistent with the controllers' releases, we are not able and prepared to undertake to-day.

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