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JOINT EDITORS: PROFESSOR G. E. PEARSE, W. D. HOWIE.

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BOKSBURG-BENONI ISOLATION HOSPITAL

This is a 40-bed self-contained unit for the treatment of both European and non-European infectious cases, located adjacent to the General Hospital, seen in the background, and sharing the central services. This attractive building, with its clean planning exhibits an unusual ward system designed for maximum flexibility and ease of control, and is set in spacious grounds.

VIEW FROM SOUTH-EAST

BOKSBURG - BENONI ISOLATION HOSPITAL

EAST RAND. TRANSVAAL

STEGMANN, ORPEN AND PORTER, A.A.R.I.B.A., M.M.I.A. ARCHITECTS

THE BUILDING

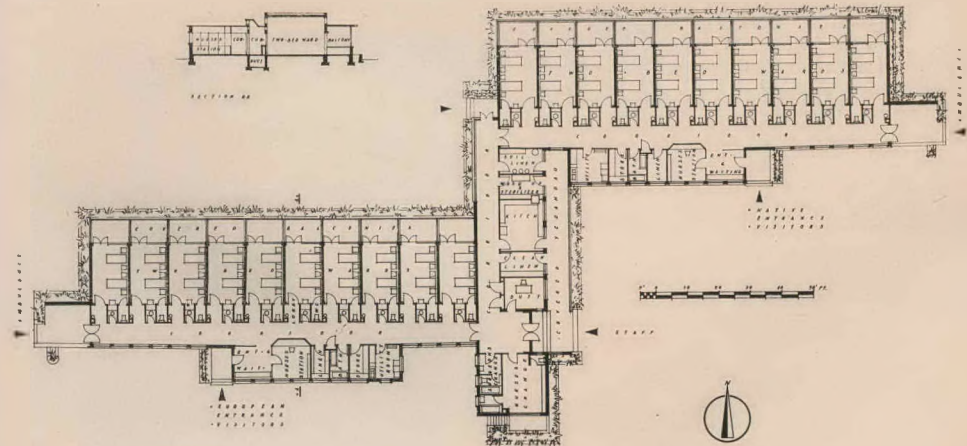
This forms a self-contained unit of 40 beds providing for both European and non-European infectious cases. It is located on a level site adjacent to the General Hospital in order to share the central Administrative, Medical, Food, Boiler and Laundry Services as well as the Medical Officers' and Nurses' Residences.

The general form and character is a simple expression of the plan and materials of construction, face-brick work being used where subject to discolouration and hard wear, such as in the plinths and the linings to the entrances and verandahs. A flat roof insulated by two layers of hollow tile provides a permanent form of construction and a hard washable plaster ceiling in

addition to making full ventilation of the wards (by clerestory windows) as well as the patients' W.C.'s and visitors' cubicles a comparatively simple matter.

THE PLAN

Owing to the large number of infectious diseases to be catered for both in Europeans and non-Europeans, male, female and children, a large number of small wards were found to be essential—two beds to each being the most suitable on balance when considering flexibility, cost, and companionship for patients. The wards are grouped in two sections, European and non-European, each comprising 20 beds and ancillary accommodation, but sharing centrally placed service and Administrative Rooms.





A typical ward opening on to the screened balcony. Adequate cross-ventilation is provided by the clerestory ventilators, in the south wall, below which are seen the ward entrance-lobby, the visitors' glazed cubicle and the water closet.

INTERIOR FINISHES

Walls and ceiling generally hard plaster and matt oil paint.

Rubber floors to corridors, wood blocks to wards, ceramic tiles to service rooms.

Service room walls have cream glazed tiles, stainless steel sinks and working benches, chromium plated taps and branches. All pipe work is concealed in large main ducts and subsidiary branches carried under the floors.

Photo: Alan Yates

THE WARD UNITS

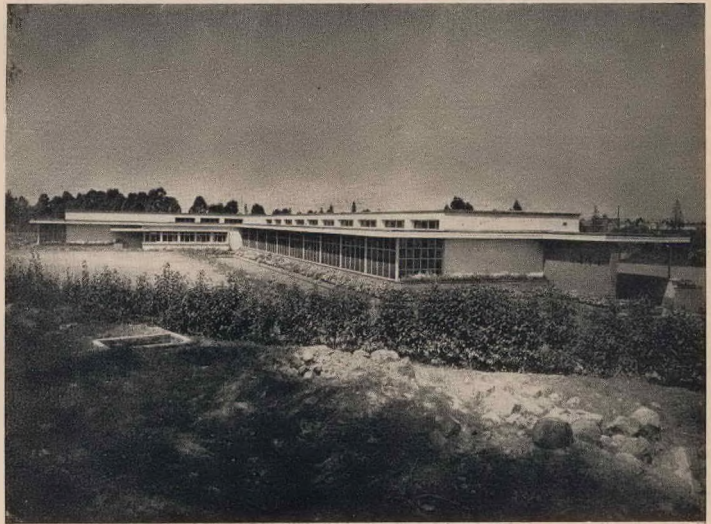
An unusual feature of the well organised planning is to be seen in the treatment of the ward units. Each ward forms an entirely self-contained cell with its individual lavatory and water closet, from which, once settled in, the patient is not allowed to move. Visitors are introduced by way of visitors' entrances controlled by the centrally placed nurses' stations supervising the access to visitors' lobbies, one to each ward, which are provided with telephones and glazed screens for aural and visual communication with the patients. The entrance lobby to each ward serves to keep the ward doors well removed from the general circulation and holds three gowns and a hand bowl of disinfectant for the use of the Medical and Nursing Staff. The nursing procedure is thus: Rinse hands, gown, enter ward, attend patient, leave ward, remove gown, rinse hands, proceed to next ward.

While providing for a maximum flexibility in use, the planning renders control and administration simple and straightforward, while at the same time, it reduces the possibility of contact and cross-infection to a minimum.

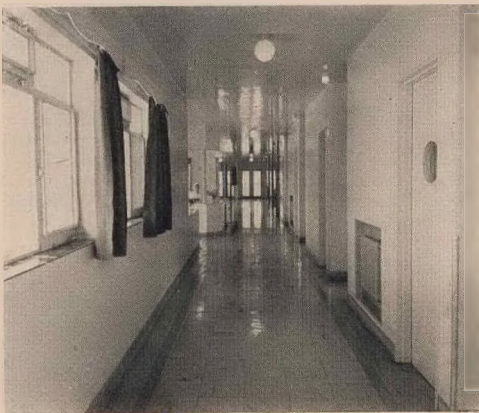
Each bed has its own light and a telephone connected to that in the visitors' cubicle, which like the water closet, is lit and ventilated by a separate system of clerestory windows as indicated on the section overleaf.



VIEW FROM NORTH-WEST, showing the screened ward balconies, the ambulance entrance at right and the extensive flower boxes which add a colourful note to the composition.



The Nurse's Station is centrally placed for ease of service and is fully glazed to provide an uninterrupted view along the corridors—slightly tapered for this purpose—over the visitors' cubicles and ward entrances to ensure rigid control.



PLANTING

Full use has been made by the Parks and Estates Departments (the Boksburg and Benoni Municipalities) of the flower boxes, designed as part of the building to soften the strong horizontal lines and to add detail and colour to the composition. The gardens provide an interesting view from the wards and verandahs, a most important consideration on account of the long time factor in the convalescence or isolation of infectious diseases.

THE DYNAMIC OF TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

by Gilbert McAllister, M.P.

The New Towns Bill introduced by Mr. Lewis Silkin, the Minister of Town and Country Planning, which, as I write, has passed through all its stages in the House of Commons and happily begun its progress through the Second Chamber with an unopposed Reading, gives legislative form to an idea which has been keenly discussed for almost half a century. In 1898 the London firm of Swan, Sonnenschein & Company published a little book called *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*.^{*} Its author was an obscure Law Courts reporter named Ebenezer Howard. There was nothing about the publication calculated to arouse more than a passing, casual and restricted interest: it might very well have fallen stillborn from the press. Instead it had a remarkable reception. It was reviewed at length in newspapers of every political complexion and of none. It was reviewed curiously enough, in the *Court Circular*: it was reviewed equally favourably in Robert Blatchford's Socialist weekly *The Clarion*. The name "Garden City" immediately sprang into current usage and retained its popular and inspiring qualities for close on half a century before it began to wither slightly under the misuse of the speculative builder and the word-snobbery of Bloomsbury and Whitehall. It was adopted not only into the English language but into most other languages, quite recognizable as *Cité-Jardin*, *Gartenstadt*, *Cuidad-Jardin* and *Tuinstad*.

Within a few months of the publication of the book a meeting was held in the Holborn Restaurant to form an association to give to this airy nothing of the imagination a local habitation and a name. The chair was taken by the late Ralph Nevill, K.C., who thus became the first president of the Garden City Association, with the late Dr. Thomas Adams (afterwards famous as the town planner of New York) as the first secretary. The Association set out to raise the necessary capital to embark on the building of the first prototype Garden City. They found the public not unresponsive. A company called First Garden City Limited was registered and a site was chosen in the remote and inconvenient, but of course cheap, part of Hertfordshire where the town of Letchworth now stands. The Association crystallized the idea of the Garden City which it defined as

a town designed for healthy living and industry, of a size which makes possible a full social life but not larger, sur-

rounded by a green belt, the whole of the land being held in common ownership or in trust for the community.

There was of course nothing startlingly revolutionary about this conception. It was the idea which had motivated Robert Owen at New Lanark and at Orbiston. It was the idea which pervaded the writings of Ruskin who in *Sesame and Lilies* sketched the idea of the walled town with

no festering or wretched suburb anywhere, but clean and busy street within and the open country without, with a belt of beautiful garden and orchard round the walls, so that from any part of the city perfectly fresh air and grass and sight of far horizon might be reachable in a few minutes' walk.

It was the idea expressed in William Morris's *News from Nowhere*. It was the main theme of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. It embodied the Patrick Geddes trilogy of *Place, Work, Folk*. It was the reply not only to Cobbett's criticism of London but to Lord Rosebery when, as Chairman of the London County Council, he said:

I am always haunted by the awfulness of London: by the great appalling fact of these millions cast down, as it would appear by hazard, on the banks of this noble stream, working each in their own groove and their own cell, without regard or knowledge of each other, without heeding each other, without having the slightest idea how the other lives—the heedless casualty of unnumbered thousands of men. Sixty years ago a great Englishman, Cobbett, called it the great wen. If it was a wen then what is it now? A tumour, an elephantiasis sucking into its gorged system half the life and blood and the bone of the rural districts.

Prince Peter Kropotkin gave something like scientific clarity to the ideas floating in the air and certainly foreshadowed the Report of the Barlow Commission forty years later when in *Fields, Factories and Workshops* he advocated the limitation of town growth and the decentralization of population and industry.

Letchworth was built: and, after the first world war, Welwyn. That the two towns succeeded cannot be doubted. They survived the test of ordinary commercial enterprise and paid their way. They had their difficult periods, of course, but each has paid for many years the maximum permitted dividend. They proved that it was possible to create beautiful residential estates within walking distance of well equipped

* It was republished in 1902 under the title *Garden Cities of To-morrow*. A new edition, edited with a preface by F. J. Osborn, and with an introductory essay by Lewis Mumford, was published last year (Faber & Faber, 6s.).

and well laid out factory estates, and these not for light industries only but for heavy industries including at Letchworth a steelworks and at Welwyn heavy engineering. Above all they succeeded from the health point of view. They have the lowest death rates in the United Kingdom. Their infantile mortality rate is so low that one has to go to New Zealand for a comparison. When Manchester Corporation, first among the local authorities to possess the imagination and the determination necessary to emulate the Garden City example, embarked on Wythenshawe and moved the population from Hulme district to the new satellite town, every death rate fell by half within three years.

Years of propaganda and demonstration did not have the desired effect. The State and the municipalities were reluctant to embark on an adventure which small groups of private people had successfully undertaken. Overseas the idea grew and was translated into reality. France, Holland, pre-Hitler Germany, the Soviet Union, Australia, where Canberra the capital was a direct inspiration from the Garden City movement, and the United States, where President Roosevelt's "green belt cities", although largely and mistakenly dormitories, were built—all proved more eager than Britain to follow the example so clearly demonstrated. It was the impact of Munich which finally shattered the complacencies. Under the threat of aerial bombardment it became as strategically necessary to adopt a policy of dispersal for industry and population as the state of the distressed areas—to which a policy of centralization had contributed so much—had made such a policy socially and economically desirable. The Report of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population, the Barlow Report, published as the population was lustily but prematurely singing "We'll Hang Out the Washing on the Siegfried Line", contained recommendations advocating a precisely similar policy to that urged by the Town and Country Planning Association. The Association had put in the forefront of its policy—as did the Barlow Report—the necessity for the creation of a central planning authority. This was implemented in some degree when Lord Reith was appointed as Minister responsible for the physical planning of Britain's town and countryside. The Reports of two committees set up by him, that under Lord Justice Scott on the future of rural land use and that under Mr. Justice Uthwatt on the vexed question of compensation and betterment, completed the Whitehall survey of problems which had to be solved if the reconstruction of Britain after World War II was not to be subject to interminably frustrating delays.

It would be foolish, however, to imagine that any Government or any Minister of Town and Country Planning would have had the courage or the imagination to go forward with a New Towns policy. History will, I think, give full credit to Mr. Lewis Silkin, the Minister of Town and Country Planning, for having pressed forward with a policy which, for the first time since town planning became the subject of legislation, takes physical planning out of the rut of restrictive, negative,

permissive and fairly futile regulations into which it had fallen: the New Towns Bill for the first time makes planning not merely a matter of zoning for industry here, for a rural belt there and for ten or one to the acre in this place or that, but a matter of taking the plan from the drawing office to the site and clothing it in three dimensions. In my view there is no other form of planning.

And yet, now that the vague aspirations of half a century are about to be fulfilled some stray doubts creep in. Some of them have been quite needlessly produced by the Minister who, ignoring the recommendations of the Lord Reith Committee, says that the State-sponsored corporation (and no great municipality such as Manchester or no inspired group of enthusiasts) shall alone build a new town. He stakes everything on the idea that the State corporation can always do things better than private enterprise however controlled, however restricted, however willingly it parts with its time-honoured freedom of action. Such a view has breath-taking implications. It means that in the Minister's view the State corporation will build not only better than Welwyn or Letchworth but better too than Bath, better than the New Town of Edinburgh, better—dare we say it?—than Nash.

Then there are all the other questions which obtrude themselves at such a time. How far it is reasonable to encompass an old community and destroy its way of life in order to provide a new community? Have we the right to uproot and dispossess? What of agriculture? What of the community life in the new towns and can community life anyway be thrust upon a population? Stevenage was in some ways a bad start. Even if an unpopular but widely circulated national newspaper had not sought to exploit the situation for the sake of Party advantage—or something—there was nevertheless a reality of bewilderment and dismay which could have been avoided if the whole scheme had been clearly and timously explained to the indigenous population. And what of the people who are to be moved out from the huddled slums but also from the colourful streets of our overcrowded cities? These are all relevant and important questions. They do not suggest, however, that the whole question is an insoluble one: they merely confirm that it is a complex one.

The problem may be shorn of some of its complexities however when some simple considerations are taken into account. The first of these is the question of alternatives. These are so glaringly before us that they have only to be considered to be dismissed as intolerable. They are suburban sprawl, ribbon development, rural scatter, or their antithesis, urban congestion. Ribbon, sprawl and scatter are the best devices for ruining agriculture and the countryside yet conceived by man. They provide their inhabitants with the worst of both worlds since they lack equally the amenities of the town and the refreshment of the countryside. Urban congestion, on the other hand, is a device which appeals to many who, loving the countryside themselves, would nevertheless condemn the mass of their fellow citizens to inadequate sunshine, light and air and would deny

them that ready access to the soil which answers one of man's deepest needs. Such a one, for example, is Dr. C. E. M. Joad who in his latest book *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Countryside* puts forward a plan for flats which does credit neither to his knowledge, his logic, his philosophy nor anything else that becomes a responsible man. He talks of the Karl Marx Hof in Vienna and praises it and bids us follow the example of the gay Viennese. How gaily, how wantonly the Viennese embarked on these massive machines for living, history, did Dr. Joad but know it, already records. The Viennese flats have been condemned not only by responsible architects and officials associated with the venture but by many visiting British housing experts who expected to find well-planned apartments and instead found living boxes 400 square feet in area. The flats were to be the answer to suburban sprawl. Behind the medieval encircling wall the workers modern barricades, the crèche, the communal laundry, the communal recreation room, those places where everything is in common and the only uncommon things are privacy, solitude, quiet and the right of a man to be himself by himself. Cramped in their hygienic cells, frustrated in their birth-control barracks, sun and wind and soil starved in their cement and stucco wilderness, the wretched inhabitants of these final monuments to a neopolitan civilization did the natural thing. It is easier to lay down rules than to have them carried out; and the Viennese workers were not so easily tamed. They went out to the outskirts of Vienna and they dug their allotments. They did more. They built sheds—at first to hold their gardening tools. Later the sheds were converted into shanties which became the Vienna workers' equivalent of the English week-end cottage—hardly an effective way of preserving the countryside.

But Dr. Joad had no need to look to Vienna. He should have read his Abercrombie. Before starting out on a work of this kind—unless he wished us to look upon him as the arch example of the untutored townsman—he should have read his County of London Plan. There he would have seen how one million people moved out of the County of London area in one decade before the war. Why? Why did the "best elements" of the County population move out? They went for simple human reasons. They went because they were tired of the noise and the dust and the lack of sunshine of inner London. They went because they wanted to have a house of their own with a bit of garden round it where the children could play, the housewife could occasionally rest, and the husband could find exercise for his body and rest for his spirit in one of the most harmless of hobbies. And if they went to Hendon or Burnt Oak or Mill Hill or Becontree and not to that older, more spacious and altogether more elegant suburb in which Dr. Joad resides, they went for very much the same reasons as impelled him to make his home in Hampstead.

If we can put a limit to our cities by encircling them with a green belt and place the overspill in new towns beyond the green belt, each having its own agricultural belt inviolable

against building, then we shall be able to thin out our existing city populations, re-house their still numerous inhabitants at not inhuman densities and provide for the inhabitants of the new towns an environment fairer and better than the mass of people in this country have ever known.

Only the new towns solution provides the answer to so many problems. The answer to the preservation of the countryside: to the re-building of our cities in a more spacious way: the answer which will put an end to some of the needless—stupid and depressing—as well as expensive—straphanging which is the lot of so many millions to-day. Only the new towns solution brings housing into its proper relationship with work and brings both into relation with every other facility and amenity of town life—the school, the church, the theatre, the shopping centre, golf-courses, tennis courts, etc.—and the whole were to be restrained from free access to the land of their fathers by those with convenient access to a thriving and unspoilt agricultural background.

Will the workers want to go to these new towns? That raises a larger question: does the worker ever choose where he will live? In the main he does not. His first quest is for a job, a steady job with security and a modest wage. When Messrs. Stewart & Lloyd moved from Lanarkshire to Northamptonshire, they had not the slightest difficulty in persuading ninety per cent. of the population of two large villages, Bellshill and Mossend, to uproot themselves and go en masse to a new and alien country. It is also not irrelevant to remember the mass emigration of the working class—again some of the best and most enterprising elements—to America, to Canada, to New Zealand and Australia, which was a feature of the nineteen-twenties. If that proved anything it proved that the working class were willing to move to the other end of the earth and start life anew if only they could be satisfied that there was work to do, a little more money to be earned and a fairer start for their children. There will be no difficulty in populating the new towns if the Board of Trade and the other Government Departments responsible see to it that industrial development keeps pace with residential development.

What will the new towns look like? That is a question which no one can answer. Much will depend on the architect-town-planner responsible for the site layout and for setting the general pattern of the building development. It will depend in one instance, I feel sure, on Sir Patrick Abercrombie; in another on a Thomas Sharpe, or a Gordon Stephenson. It will depend on whether the architect is a disciple of Le Corbusier or Frank Lloyd Wright or whether he prefers to follow the more traditional ways of Sir Raymond Unwin, Sir Edwin Lutyens or Mr. Louis de Soissons. I hope that the New Town Corporations will be catholic in their approach to the problem and that we shall see in the new towns architectural and building conceptions wholly integrated in themselves but differing from one another and each somehow reflecting the best tendencies, socially as well as aesthetically, of the age in which we live.

The architect-town-planner is important. No less important is the sociologist, the man who has studied the ways of his fellowmen and can in some degree satisfy even his unexpressed desires. For we are not embarking on this gigantic project in order to build for the sake of building. We are building for the community, for the nation, for the family which is the heart of the community and of the nation. We are trying to create an environment in which every good human impulse will have room to grow and to express itself. We are saying goodbye to the ugly and the mean, to all those things which degraded our town building in the last hundred years and that produced the Gorbals (no miracle there except perhaps that in that sunless slumdom the human spirit did somehow survive, warm-hearted and generous), that produced Salford and a hundred other denials of man's personality.

The new towns which are to be built may very well be the most lasting gift of our time to posterity. Town and country planning is unlike most other human activities in that it costs very little. It does not alter the volume of building: it merely says where the building must go and where it must not go. It is the cheapest national investment: it brings the greatest rewards. That was a fact which was clear to William Morris, to Bruce Glasier and to many of the other early workers in

the British Labour movement. Between the wars the Labour movement tended to forget the importance of physical environment in its struggle for more immediate objectives. It is perhaps a sign that the movement is going back to its native roots and ideals that one of the first acts of the first majority Labour Government should be to introduce into Parliament the New Towns legislation. The translation of this legislation into physical being will call for the applied zeal of men and women of many varying capacities. The Minister, who is to choose the personnel of the New Towns Corporations, has a difficult task in selecting teams which combine practical and business capacity with social idealism and human understanding. There is an opportunity which many will envy. They will need courage. They will make mistakes—they will need courage to make mistakes and sense to recognize them as mistakes. If they hesitate and delay they will deserve censure: if they go boldly ahead they will have support and approval—and what is most important, understanding. They will be engaged on what is—the war apart—the highest adventure of our time.

(Mr. Gilbert McAllister, Member of Parliament for Rutherglen, was formerly the editor of TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING and is the joint editor with Elizabeth McAllister of HOMES, TOWNS AND COUNTRYSIDE recently published by Batsford (18s.).)

SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN 1632-1723

By JOHN STEEGMAN

Sir Christopher Wren, Britain's most famous architect and designer of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, has left a bigger impression on the architecture of the City than any other man. He was also brilliant in other directions, and was spoken of with admiration by Newton in respect of the mathematical work which he did while he was at Oxford University. He is buried in his own Cathedral of St. Paul, which his son described as his monument.

From an engraving by W. Holt



The last quarter of the 17th Century in England is of vital importance in the history of scientific discovery and philisophic theory. The first quarter of the 18th Century is of an equal importance as the great formative period in literary and artistic taste, with the establishment of canons which brought England into the front rank of European civilising forces. John Locke, Robert Boyle and Isaac Newton are the giants of the former; of the latter, the great figures are Alexander Pope, Joseph Addison, Lord Shaftesbury and Lord Bolingbroke. One man, unique in English history, holds a place throughout that period among the greatest of the creative artists as well: Christopher Wren.

Wren is unquestionably the most famous English architect. But had he devoted his whole life to his original career, instead of only the first thirty years of it, he would probably have become the most famous English astronomer; he would, as a mathematician, have acquired a fame second to none in Europe except Newton. However, he chose to devote himself to architecture, which is fortunate for England and the world, since he incalculably enriched our inheritance.

Wren was the son of a distinguished clergyman, the Dean of Windsor, and nephew of the influential Bishop of Ely. At the age of only fifteen, he was chosen by the surgeon, Sir Charles Searburgh, as his assistant in anatomy. Preeocious children are not uncommon, but it is unusual for them to make a reputation in several different careers and remain famous till death at the age of 91!

As a student at Oxford University, which he entered in 1649 at the age of 17, he at once distinguished himself in mathematics, and Newton afterwards spoke admiringly of his work done at that time. By 1660 Wren's reputation was such that he was appointed to the Chair of Astronomy in the University. By the time he was thirty, he had anticipated by some years several of the discoveries of both Newton and Leibnitz in pure mathematics: in astronomy he had immensely advanced the knowledge of stellar space, of the earth's motion and of the orbits of comets; he had produced a greatly improved telescope, and also scores of practical inventions for use in everyday life. In fact, during these years, the papers he read, and the experiments he performed, before the Royal Society would

constitute a full life's work for most eminent scientists.

But so far as his fame as a natural philosopher is concerned, Wren suffered from one great disadvantage: he was the contemporary of Newton. Great as was Wren's mathematical genius, it is overshadowed by the towering intellect of Sir Isaac.

As an architect, however, Wren is overshadowed by nobody, not even by Inigo Jones, his nearest rival. Indeed, it is Wren who causes Jones to be rather obscured, though Jones so largely paved the way for him by his introduction into England, forty years earlier, of the tastes for classical and Renaissance architecture, and of the standards of artistic scholarship in which Wren's practice was based.

It was not until about 1665 that Wren finally embarked upon the career of an architect, though his first works were produced about two years earlier than that—the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford, and the chapel of Pembroke College, Cambridge. Early in 1666 King Charles II asked him to prepare plans for the reconstruction of old St. Paul's Cathedral, which must have been a difficult task, for the great Gothic building had long been semi-ruinous. Inigo Jones had prolonged its life by repairs and by the addition of a new west front thirty-five years earlier, but the position had already become as serious as ever before. And then, in September, 1666, came the great Fire of London. It was the opportunity of Wren's life, for to him fell the task of building the new St. Paul's.

The old cathedral had been reduced to a total ruin by the Fire, beyond hope of repair. But there was much still standing that had to be demolished before construction of a new church could begin. The tower itself still stood, 200 feet high, and

demolition in that very crowded and built-up neighbourhood was both difficult and dangerous. A well-known story tells of Wren using his amazing knowledge to calculate a charge of explosive just sufficient to raise the whole tower a few inches and bring it all down without scattering. This was done, without causing any damage in the neighbourhood.

The demolition took about two years, but work on the new cathedral did not begin till six or seven years later. After the foundations had been cleared, the first stone was laid in 1675. The choir was opened for use in 1687, and the last stone of the Cathedral was set in place in 1710. Wren was then 78, and had another thirteen years of life before him.

The architect produced several designs for St. Paul's; some were approved and some were rejected, either by Charles II or by the Cathedral authorities. But the building as finally carried out is incomparably finer than any of the designs. Wren profoundly admired, among his predecessors, Brunelleschi and, among his contemporaries, Bernini; he took ideas from both, as Inigo Jones had done from Palladio. St. Paul's in London and St. Peter's in Rome are always being compared; so far as exteriors are concerned, it is generally conceded that the cupola of the former is an improvement on the latter, in relation to the façades. St. Paul's has another advantage over St. Peter's, in that its exterior height is divided into two orders which greatly enlarge and dignify the scale of the whole, while that of St. Peter's has a single order of colossal columns and pilasters which dwarfs the entire fabric. Wren also designed a piazza and colonnade to surround his cathedral, somewhat on the model of Bernini at Rome, but this unfortunately was never carried out, owing to the private property-owning interests



The south and east fronts of Hampton Court Palace seen from the garden.



"Si Monumentum Requiri's Circumspice"

that would have been dispossessed. The same opposition wrecked his magnificent plan for a whole new lay-out of London, which would have made it the most stately and spacious city in Europe except, perhaps, the Paris of Napoleon.

There was, however, a part of this great plan which was carried out. This was the building of 52 churches to replace those destroyed by the Fire of 1666; many of them are famous in architectural history: St. Stephen's, Walbrook; St. Michael's, Cornhill; St. Bride's, Fleet Street; St. Mary-le-Bow; St. James's, Piccadilly. Many have been destroyed since 1940 by German air attack, but enough survive, even apart from St. Paul's, to show us the variety of Wren's imagination and the certainty of his taste, shown sometimes by a spire composed as classically as a Pindaric ode, sometimes by a rich baroque interior. The exteriors are generally plain, but every one of those churches is, or was, a valuable study in planning. And what a spectacle Wren's London must have been! We can see it in the paintings of Canaletto, who came to London 25 years after Wren's death and stayed there nine years: we see those fifty gleaming white stone spires, all varied and all supremely elegant, grouped round the great dome of St. Paul's, forming a view perhaps unequalled in any other country—the work of a single genius.

Wren's activities, however, were by no means limited to the rebuilding of London. Among his greatest surviving works are the classically perfect Trinity Library at Cambridge; the stately Chelsea Hospital; the charming small Palace of Kensington; and Marlborough House, built for the great Duke of Marlborough, but rather spoilt by later additions. At Christchurch, Oxford, he experimented successfully with an earlier

and more romantic mode. At Hampton Court Palace he defied the existing 16th century style of courts and towers, and built a block which for dignity and perfection of form and scale is perhaps his secular masterpiece. And at Greenwich, where he gave his services free, he built two noble blocks in complete harmony with, and in deference to, the existing work of his great predecessor, Inigo Jones.

As was then the custom for men in public positions, Wren entered Parliament; he became member for Plympton in 1685. There is here a happy coincidence: this obscure little borough in Devon, which was represented by England's greatest architect, was also the birthplace of Joshua Reynolds, England's greatest painter. And Reynolds was born in the year of Wren's death. For fifty years, Wren held the post of Surveyor of the Royal Works, but in 1718 he gave it up, finding that the usual professional jealousies and irritations were becoming too much for him. He was 85 when he retired from practice. Six years later, in 1723, he died from a chill caught while travelling up to London. He was buried in his own Cathedral of St. Paul's, which, as his son said, is his monument.

Inigo Jones, in point of architectural scholarship, may be Wren's superior. But the form of Palladianism which he introduced, though it resulted in some of the finest things in English architecture, was somewhat too strict for all but the most fastidious tastes. Wren's work, on the other hand, has a humanity and warmth that has endeared it to all succeeding generations; from it proceeds the main tradition of the 18th century English architecture, which is probably England's chief contribution to the arts of Europe.

STUDENTS' FORUM

NOVEMBER 1946
STUDENT EDITOR
S. A. ABRAMOWITZ

THE HISTORIC BUILDINGS OF JOHANNESBURG - 5

HERETIER BUILDINGS - "THE OLD CUSTOMS HOUSE"

By Cyril A. Stoloff, Dip. Arch. III

This unpretentious little building is situated in Jeppe Street, between Anstey's Building and the new Criterion Hotel. Better known as the Old Customs House, it is however called Heretier Buildings, and its offices are now utilised by the Union Government Immigration Department.

Its dignity reflects a bygone era in Johannesburg, and was built at a time when it certainly was less incongruous with its neighbours than it is to-day. The old Orpheum Theatre, scene of early "talkie" films, stood in place of Anstey's Building, while the old Criterion Hotel, a typical late Victorian cast iron structure, has given way to its contemporary successor.

The charming façade of this building is simple and elegant—almost French in character. The general feeling is essentially one of sobriety, as opposed to the wildness of its contemporary buildings. The proportions are reasonably satisfying—plain wall surfaces punctuated with well-defined windows, slightly projecting pilasters, and very bold, yet simple cornices. The little attic windows and crowning gable, complete a façade based purely on a symmetrical theme.

From the point of view of colour, Time appears to have played the major role—the walls being a mellowed corn colour, contrasting slightly with the weathered grey of the roof.

Bearing in mind that in the early years of this century, the majority of the civic buildings were massive Classic or Gothic Revivals with exuberant decoration, it is quite refreshing to note this rather unusual example of Johannesburg's early architecture.



Photo: E. Rubinow.

THE NATIONAL STUDENT ART EXHIBITION

The onerous task of fostering student and public interest in both architecture and art generally, has in the past fallen primarily on the shoulders of the Students' Architectural Society at the Witwatersrand University. Towards the end of 1945, however, the committee of this society decided to approach other cultural associations at the University for the purpose of establishing an Arts Council. This body could then undertake the promulgation of matters apropos of art, sculpture, drama, music, etc., all of which had, of course, been fostered by small, unrelated groups of students before, but which now definitely required a larger co-ordinating body to re-establish their correct and ideal relationships with each other.



One of the major accomplishments of the Arts Council this year was a National Student Art Exhibition, held under the auspices of N.U.S.A.S. (National Union of South African Students) concurrently with their annual conference in July of this year.

Unfortunately the exhibition was not quite as national as was at first hoped, the only other centres represented being Cape Town, in the photographic section; and Grahamstown Training College in the painting section. The latter presented a series of decorative panels, in tempera. They were imaginative and colourful, and the subjects indicated that they would find a most suitable home in a children's nursery.



The exhibition was comprised of several sections, these being: painting, sculpture, photography, architectural renderings, and arts and crafts.

The general impression was one of youthfulness and freshness, but the former did not necessarily always imply immaturity. I feel that the lack of a pressing financial atmosphere at the exhibition was extremely conducive to the many free and individual styles that one encountered.

An unusual but interesting style was shown by Emman Calliannis, who incidentally has had overseas training. His work inclined towards the abstract and his colour was very subdued at times perhaps too much so. His "Portrait of Mr. M. K." was undoubtedly a fine character study.

Willem Blom was a prolific contributor and amongst his work there was a pleasing red conte study of a native woman's head, and a finely executed monotype of trees. Both he and Oliver Knight appeared to be under a similar influence as could be noticed from their various "studies" and still lifes.

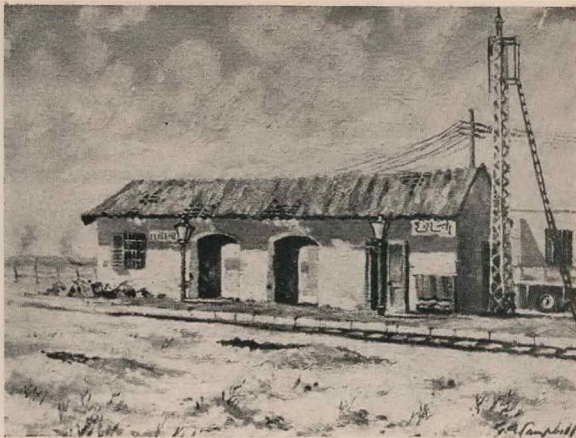


"Still Life." Wim. Swaan (oil).



Photo: R. Rautenbach.

"John Hunter," by Ismond Rosen (bronze).



"El Alamein Station." Alan Campbell (oil).

A provoking but rather superficial surrealist touch was evident in "First Love" and "Portrait of a Soul" by Stanley Dorfman. Of Pancho Guedes' work, "The Death House" created a fine atmosphere, and the "Card Players" with its dull flat washes and heavy black outlines showed a deep social significance which should be highly commended.

Unusual techniques were employed both in Jack Furmanovsky's striking study of a seated man in grease crayon, and Gilbert Herbert's "Grapes of Wrath" which combined ink together with what might almost be termed an oil-wash.

Wim Swaan displayed great maturity and a fine sense of composition in his "Still Life," which was undoubtedly one of the best works on display.

In "The Concert" of Monty Sack there was some fine feeling and a clever portrayal of movement.

On the whole, the water colour section displayed a true understanding of the medium.

Alan Campbell's work was quite technically perfect, and "The Pump House" by David Connell was a colourful and well-balanced composition.

"St. John's Bell Tower" and "Street Scene" of Dennis Roux were both well-handled, as was Sidney Abramowitch's pale and ethereal "Misty Dawn."

An individual technique was employed by Maurice Meyer-sohn, who outlined his vividly coloured sketches with heavy grease crayon.

Two very mature pieces of sculpture were displayed by Ismond Rosen, one a bronze head, and the other a seated figure in African wood. Both showed a sensitive perception of materials and a high standard of craftsmanship.

In the Photographic Section the work of both A. Bensusan and R. Rautenbach reached a high professional standard, both in composition and detail. Amongst the Arts and Crafts there was an interesting display of leather work, copper beating and wood carving.

As this exhibition proved to be a great success, it is earnestly hoped that it will become an accepted annual event in the future.

R. L.

CONTEMPORARY JOURNALS

"THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW," August, 1946.

The Architecture of New Orleans, by C. J. Laughlin, is a broad survey of historic New Orleans, from the social and architectural viewpoint, well illustrated with photographs of the contemporary buildings. *Interesting Matter*, annotated and discussed by Richard Southern, covers much of the details of the old Theatre Royal at Ipswich, which has since disappeared, recorded by H. R. Eyre, who became its manager in 1887, in a richly illustrated manuscript—seraphook.

Contemporary architecture illustrated includes the new Waterloo Bridge and the Town Hall at Aarhus, Denmark. Design Review discusses and illustrates the remarkable variety of gas appliances now manufactured in Britain.

"ARCHITECTURAL RECORD," August, 1946.

This issue continues the studies of hospital planning, and under Building Types Study 116, *Notes on Hospital Planning*, provides the text supplementing the basic recommendations graphically presented in the preceding issues. Also published is the project by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill for a small city hospital; the Heidelberg Military Hospital in Melbourne by Leighton Irwin and Company.

In addition, three different and well detailed examples of store design by Morris Lapidus are illustrated; and under "Architectural Engineering" Kenneth C. Welch, A.I.A., I.E.S., discusses "New Concepts in Store Lighting".

"PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE—PENCIL POINTS," August, 1946.

Architectural projects illustrated include the well-planned Sylacauga Hospital, the Sylvan Lake Hotel in the "National Park Log Cabin Style", the Harlem Branch of the New York Public Library and two houses. Lewis Mumford contributes three important suggestions for a World Centre for the United Nations.

"Materials and Methods" contains a technical article by Paul D. Close on *Theory and Basic Principles of Insulation and Part I of Waterproofing and Dampproofing* by Ben John Small, outlining current practice.

"THE ARCHITECTURAL FORUM," August, 1946.

Amster Yard is a skillful reconstruction scheme in the heart of a neglected city block providing flats and professional offices round a garden.

New Zealand's state housing programme is said to set a national standard unparalleled in any other country, and examples of two flat buildings erected in Wellington are illustrated.

Projects for a skating rink and the reorganisation of a shopping centre of the City of Rye, N.Y. The Berla and Abel Portfolio illustrates a range of flat and row-house buildings in brick facing designed by the architects in Washington.

Four examples of remodelled restaurants conclude the issue.

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