

Summary

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Summary

General Motors Technical Center (pages 145-150)

The General Motors Technical Center, a research centre on the northern outskirts of Detroit, costing 100 million dollars, was completed after scarcely six years of construction. It comprises today 24 buildings, and by 1949 after only two years under construction when only three buildings were finished it was already being widely discussed by architects. An excursion around the 2.5 sq. km. site does not leave one with the impression of overwhelming industrialism or technology. No building is more than three storeys high. The entire research centre with its 3500 research personnel, engineers, technicians and other specialists is grouped around a rectangular artificial lake 590 m. long, 190 m. wide. The longitudinal elevations of the buildings are of simple structure, and their repetition is not monotonous: rectangular glass panels fixed in aluminium frames, broken up here and there by black enamel bands. The lateral walls are colourful (blue, red, yellow, orange, ochre etc. nine shades in all); they are constructed of ordinary bricks glazed and then burned a second time.

Its prominent landmark is a stainless steel water tower barely 50 m. high. It furnishes the necessary water pressure in the midst of this flat country. Other functional aspects reveal themselves when we stop to consider what after all is the purpose of the Center: the "Exploration of the Industrial Future" and bear in mind the work carried on in the various departments: metallurgical, chemical, electronic laboratories, testing shops, construction sheds, styling section etc. Glass has been generously used in the laboratories and offices resulting in an effect of transparency and a maximum utilization of daylight which seems appropriate to the spirit of scientific research. On the other hand, the isotope laboratories, the wind tunnel and the motor testing shed (e.g. for gas turbine experiments) are almost windowless, as this part of the Center is strictly secret; however, the brightly coloured lateral walls impart an effect of accessibility and cheerfulness which is anything but sinister.

Some Technical Details: The offices are equipped with oxygen, hydrogen and gas outlets so that as the need arises they can at any time be converted into laboratories. This flexibility marks all the various departments of GM (automotive, frigidaire, diesel). The open spaces are not merely empty areas designed for the sake of fresh air, but the garden of the styling section for example serves as an exhibition area for inspection of new car models. In the open air, that is under the conditions in which they will later be put to the test.

The Center is not only fascinating as a whole but also satisfying in its structural details. The final impression we carry away with us is of "Perfection in Miniature," and what remains in our memory is not so much the skyline created by the larger buildings as the lamp-lit pond, the still centre of a creation that will probably outlast many other less permanent things being built today.

Workshop Building No. VIII of Franke & Heidecke, Brunswick (pages 151-153)

The Franke and Heidecke Workshop Building is situated on the edge of a residential area on the south side of Brunswick on a site sloping gently to the east. Large machine shed about 3000 sq. m. along with associated storerooms, transformer station, lavatories and lounge rooms. Factory building runs from east to west, shed construction, with adjoining wing on east side of ferro-concrete framework construction over filled-up

ground. On account of eastward slope lower floor of wing juts out at about window level. Large south elevation is transparent.

Construction: Essentially concrete, steel and glass. The seven Dywidag shed slabs fixed every 15 m. In lengthwise direction in ferro-concrete frames, in crosswise direction on one side every 7.50 m. in ferro-concrete gutter bearers and supported on other side by section rungs of skylights inclined 60° to north. Latter double glazed.

South outer wall between ferro-concrete elements comprises large window-frame elements about 14.75 x 3.20 m. Windows of thermopane-crystal plate glass. Light metal Venetian blinds for protection against sun. Other outer walls if not glazed in 24 cm. Holstein brick rendered inside, covered with clinker slabs outside. Roof 3 cm. cork brick slabs with 2-ply cardboard insulation. Floors in shed hall and storerooms Fama-Famin, in wash-rooms in basement tiled and in stair-case native stone slabs. Hot air heat.

New Laboratories Hausmann AG, St. Gall (pages 154-157)

New factory building for Hausmann AG Chemical-Pharmaceutical Laboratories, St. Gallen. Entire lay-out is one-storey and comprises buildings for: Scientific research, Administration, Ampule division, Galenical division, Chemical division, Depot, Packing, Forwarding, Power plant, Neutralization Installation. Each division can be enlarged independently. Construction of pavilion structure in ferro-concrete with pre-fabricated window stanchions. Concrete ceiling 8 cm. thick with built-in radiant heating. All gable ends and inside partitions do not carry load and can be altered at any time. Roof insulated with 8 cm. thick glass wool matting, covered with corrugated asbestos-cement slabs. Windows consist of element 290 x 400 cm. lower part as parapet insulated with asbestos-cement, insulating mats and wood fibre slabs, double glazed.

Simple finishing: untreated concrete ceilings, walls painted various colours. In administration area walls papered. Floors for most part in asphalt tile slabs. Cement floors covered with protective coloured coating.

Storage depot likewise ferro-concrete skeleton, roofing and elevation covering in asbestos-cement. Power plant houses boiler for heating 180° water for heating. Power plant connected with buildings by tunnel. Single areas have in middle utility passage-way for water conduits, gas mains, electric wires, etc. All conduits and cables led into basement for greater convenience in operations.

Central depot of Rotterdam public transport system (pages 158-161)

The Municipal Road and Transport Association Buildings of the City of Rotterdam are situated in close proximity to two roads and a canal.

Administration in office building in front, workshops in rear, canteen etc. between office and workshops, heating plant and pumphouse between canteen and workshops. Garden by canal. The office building is centered around administration hall on south facing garden with corridors on the other side with smaller staff rooms. The garage is a shed structure without columns about 25 m. wide. Workshops are entered through sliding doors. The canteen is a cantilevered box structure of concrete on supports with parking space for bicycles etc. between supports and surrounded by a brick wall. This section comprises wash-rooms and dressing rooms and the canteen with glass front and terrace overlooking garden and canal.

Construction: Office building: concrete frame with outside façades in glazed brick and glass. Garage: 25 m. span at height of 6 m., façades in brick and glass. Workshops: Concrete shell structures covering 10 x 15 m. area, glass roofs. Canteen: concrete box structure on supports, brick wall around basement of box structure. Pumphouse: Shell roof over the boilers, flat concrete roof over the pumps serving to tie together shell roofs of the workshops and the box-like canteen. Colour scheme: All colours are in harmony: greyish-red, greyish-blue, greyish-white. All window frames of steel painted aluminium grey.

Administration building of Stöbelwerk S.A., Rothrist (pages 162-164)

The new Administration Building of the well-known Swiss Radiator Works. Comprises alternating one-storey and two-storey sections.

Organization: Basement floor accessible by a few steps and houses workers' dressing and shower rooms. On the ground floor is situated the canteen along with a kitchen where in a very restricted space 140 meals are prepared. On the same floor on the side facing the railway are located the office entrance with waiting room and reception and a series of offices as well as the laboratory. On first floor conference room, accounting department, etc. as well as the construction shop. Canteen one storey, above remainder of building upper floor with rooms for welfare worker and canteen manageress.

Construction: Ferro-concrete with pre-fabricated supports. Window bands run outside these supports. Parapet of channeled, chilled concrete and a 36 mm. splinter insulation slab recessed 2 cm. In latter are set brackets for the heating units. Ceilings without ceiling joists. Suspended ceiling over corridor for installation of ventilation ducts. Pivoted casement windows, "Elumin" type, wood frames, metal casements. Aluminium Venetian blinds built in between the panes. On account of coal dust from the foundry, windows for most part kept closed and weather-stripping of copper.

VW-Repair workshop Max Voets Co. Ltd., Brunswick (pages 165-169)

An extension to the Max Voets VW Repair shop on the southern outskirts of Brunswick adjoining the present repair shed and comprising: Spare parts storage about 800 sq. m. working area, Quick Repair Shop, Exhibition Room, Offices for sales division and management closely adjoining Quick Repair Shop.

Construction: Supporting structure consists of lattice girders 14 m. span and R-girders 6 m. horizontal span. Roofing material 7 cm. thick ribbed slabs of pumice concrete with double layer of bitumen cardboard. Sheet zinc utilized for rain gutters fascia board. Shed skylights consist of T-sashes with simple panes; their width corresponds to height of lattice girders. Gable ends 11.5 cm. pumice concrete masonry, outside and inside sheathed with tiles.

Spare parts storeroom equipped with warm air heating elements in ceiling heated by steam; the quick repair shop with automatic hot air heat. The warm air is introduced through an open conduit sunk in the floor which runs all the way across the hall and is covered with a grid over which cars can pass. The receptacles for grease guns, oil and compressed air nozzles are housed below floor level, easily accessible by means of trap door. There is a small administration building for the required exhibition and office rooms adjoining the longitudinal wall of the shed hall.

On ground floor accessories display and spare parts office, on the upper floors rooms for management and sales division. In basement employees' dressing rooms, oil and grease stores for the quick repair shop and the oil-burning heating plant for the entire extension.

Construction: Supporting structure of building consists of a steel skeleton with solid ceilings of ferro-concrete. Masonry staircase walls sheathed with yellowish grey clinker slabs.

The office partitions, in part steel-glass, in part steel-wood construction, can be dismantled. DIG parapet elements utilized for window parapets. All office rooms fitted with suspended acoustic ceilings. Laminated radiators under the windows provide hot water heat. In addition the building is furnished with hot air heat which makes possible draft-free ventilation and in summer can be used for air-conditioning.

The walls of the shaft housing lavatories and staircases which runs through all floors are constructed as wind bracings, in this way permitting the outside supports to take the form of pendulum stanchions and the steel skeleton uncovered outside to be as slender as possible.

Stoll Chair factory in Coblenz (pages 170-171)

Model chair factory in Coblenz. In first stage of construction there has been completed a two-storey factory shed with garage annex. Organization of lay-out on basis of thorough study of operations and their sequence: fitting shop, joining shop, staining shop, polishing shop, etc.

Construction: Ferro-concrete with slabs projecting east and west. Elevations of prefabricated elements set into the framework, consist of subsidiary columns and windows with ferro-concrete frames. Every third window element with fixed panes, two window elements of narrower casement elements, fixed panes of trans-

parent glass and protected from sun by Venetian blinds, narrow parts of clouded glass. Parapets of Durisol sheathed with corrugated asbestos-cement.

All columns have square cross section, fitted with wide slots into which as needed arised partitions can be inserted. Garage structure of untreated sand-lime brick.

Dry Cleaning Establishment at Thun (page 172)

Space about 20 sq. m. used in daytime as driveway for delivery trucks, closed off by trap-door; at night parking area for firm's cars. Access to hallway on one side of which opens the cloakroom, on the other side delivery and the 40 sq. m. work-room containing the dry cleaning equipment. Construction: untreated red masonry, concrete beam ceiling (standard) resting on main supporting walls. Windows form continuous band above 1.2 m. high parapet. Supporting elements columns recessed behind the window elevations. Between columns and windows can be placed Venetian blinds. Building marked by straightforward, simple harmony.

Wohntyp Showroom, Basel (page 173)

The Walter Wirz Furniture Factory of Sissach has set up a display room in Basel with wooden roll-jointed ceiling suspended freely in the room. Floor covered with black AT slabs contrasting well with bright one-toned carpet. Walls yellow, gray and mauve, in part papered, in part painted.

Information booth of the Aluminium Center in Hanover (page 174)

The Aluminium Central was represented at the German Industries Fair in 1955 by a new information stand. Main display space with area of 7.30 x 12.25 m. All aluminium construction is transportable. Supporting structural elements stanchions of rectangular irons 120/80/4 mm. upon which are placed the headers at intervals of 1.75 m. Walls between stanchions for most part glazed. Five panels of left lateral wall pre-fabricated wall elements outside closed with corrugated sheet metal. Floors of slabs laid on supporting timber.

Contraves (page 175)

An exhibition room for the new factory building of Contraves AG in Zurich-Seebach. Located on mezzanine floor, had to be fitted out as sales room for various kinds of machines and parts. Fifteen metres long, six metres wide divided up by four partitions painted white, gray, grayish-blue and lemon yellow, which are removable. Windows and radiators were covered with white painted metal grillwork.

Renovation of Schuster and Co. Office Building (page 176)

In an already existing building three floors renovated for a rug and linoleum house. Generously glazed display and sales room extending throughout entire depth of narrow site without partition. Near entrance, cash and reception window opposite customers' stairway and lift installation. In back next to sales department small forwarding department with document lift, loading room etc.

Plan of a new factory of Eternit S.A., Niederurnen in Payerne (pages 177-180)

Branch establishment for fabricating asbestos-cement products. The first stage of construction provides for a large raw material depot, a building for preliminary processing, fabrication shed for two asbestos-cement slab machines, workshops and offices.

Smokestack and silo in ferro-concrete. Workshops project forward and are adjacent to siding of SBB, asbestos storage depot faces town. Rhythm of entire structure determined by saw-tooth roof of fabrication shed. Corrugated asbestos-cement slabs utilized as sheathing of both walls and roof.

Metal construction so designed that extensions to rear as well as to north-west would be facilitated. Machine rooms and workshops installed on side of fabrication shed on which no extensions are feasible. Display room and offices situated half floor above fabrication shed so that fabrication area can be viewed from large window of display room as from a gallery. Large depot areas for finished products ready for shipment surround the factory on all sides.