

Summary

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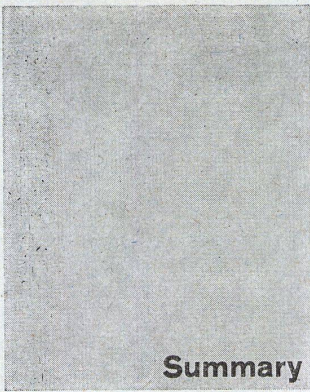
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Summary

The Humboldt School, Offenbach o. M. (pages 259—263)

The site for the new school construction is situated between Waldstrasse and Humboldtstrasse and has an area of around 7,800 sq.m. The complex consists of several buildings, which are separated from one another structurally but are connected by covered passageways. The individual buildings are integrated with the four-storey main building by means of the two-storey adjoining wing and the three connecting stair-wells, as well as with one-storey pavilion, the gymnasium and the personnel house with adjoining transformer station. The main building, which is approximately perpendicular to Humboldtstrasse contains six standard classrooms on each floor, three group rooms and three cloakrooms. The building parallel to the main building without basement rests on supports, the ground floor not being completely closed in, and houses the toilet facilities and utility rooms. The remaining space serves as covered recess area. The first floor of this building contains the special classrooms: art room, science room, music room, library, etc. Here too the only connecting element is the three stair-wells. The one-storey pavilion houses the three primary grades. With the exception of the school personnel house, all the buildings were constructed with a reinforced concrete skeleton. Rendered Ytong masonry. Reinforced concrete rib vaulting. The reinforced concrete skeleton system is left rough and colours are applied.

The Beethoven School, Offenbach o. M. (pages 264—267)

The project was to erect a school with 19 standard classrooms and 4 spare classrooms, to take up to 1000 pupils, in a suburban district of this rapidly growing industrial city. The site is in an area covered for the most part with two-storey homes. The school could be spread out without, however, it being unnecessary to resort to the pavilion type. This left large intermediate open spaces free for playgrounds, outdoor classes, gardens, etc. The architects sought to design a simple complex which nevertheless meets all the requirements of modern teaching methods, hygiene and economy. The classrooms are comprised in various groups. Two distinct two-storey classroom buildings facing south permit, if circumstances so require, a separation by sex and age group. They contain together 16 standard classrooms and 4 special classrooms, which can also be utilized as spare classrooms. All classrooms have bilateral lighting and cross-ventilation, and are nearly square (65 sq.m.). The large recess yard is laid out in front of the main classroom sections. There is a hall inside for bad weather. The classrooms closest to the hall are fitted out as special rooms (manual training, science, art, etc.). The gymnasium is quite distinct from the classroom section and it faces south with wall entirely in glass from floor to ceiling. It was necessary to have as much freedom of movement as possible with the simplest possible means, and thus the ceilings were placed without supporting structure over solid masonry walls in lengthwise direction. The extra cost of these ceilings is slight in comparison with the cost that would have been involved with pillars and cross-wise construction. The other buildings are of light one-storey construction, without heavy supporting elements. This deliberate avoidance of costly construction elements was due not only to economic considerations but was part of the design, which seeks a

far-reaching reduction of all structural details and thus creates a spacious atmosphere in which both pupils and teachers can work more creatively.

Steinmürli Primary School at Dietikon/ Zurich (pages 268—271)

The site, a relatively long narrow lot in the midst of a new residential district, had interesting possibilities. There are three sections: a classroom pavilion, a gymnasium and a music room-caretaker's flat pavilion enclose a sheltered courtyard which is open to the south and is accessible from the north and south. Exercise and sports fields are situated in the rear of the buildings, on the more level part of the site. The individual pavilions are accessible from the central courtyard, which serves at the same time as a school and community center. The twelve standard classrooms are situated, six to a floor, on a slope to the south-east; this includes the sewing room and hobby rooms (at the present time used as a classroom on account of the shortage of space). Every two classrooms have a common entrance from a hallway, which is reached either by way of a half-flight of steps up or from the entrance hall situated at mezzanine level. These three areas with their stairs are separated from one another by two open, sunken courtyards which also adjoin the entrance hall and give it light. On the opposite side are teachers' rooms and toilets between the two entrances. The gymnasium is considerably larger than a standard hall, having an area of 14 x 28 m. In addition there are accommodated in the basement a general purpose hall, a wrestling room and two hobby rooms; the ordinary utility rooms are situated on the ground floor and on the 1st floor. In the special pavilion, in addition to the music room and the caretaker's flat, are situated the heating plant, a bicycle park as well as ordinary utility rooms. The real center of the whole complex is the school courtyard closed on three sides. The cornice levels facing the yard are kept as low as possible so that at no point do heights appear which would destroy the scale, adapted as it is to primary school pupils. In line with the severe architectural design, colour was used with great restraint. The elevations, largely grey, contrast with the broad white window-frames. Most of the woodwork is of oak and left unpainted. The walls of the stair-wells and halls are coated with untreated plaster, the classroom walls are covered with Stramin and painted. For operational and architectural reasons the large lateral walls of the gymnasium were executed in untreated sand-limestone. Stairs and hall flooring is granite, that of the classrooms Linol. The concrete ceilings were covered with acoustic slabs for sound insulation.

Comprehensive School at West Bromwich, England (pages 272—277)

The West Bromwich School is a "Comprehensive School," i.e. a school for girls and boys from the 7th school year up comprising in its program all subjects, in other words, a combination of high school, secondary, applied arts and vocational school. The entire educational system was re-organized after the last world war. The new program provides that all pupils, after completing the six primary grades, have to attend the Comprehensive School. As everything is currently in a state of flux and new ideas have to be tried out, the school building program is continually being changed, and for this reason the buildings have to be disposed in such a way that they can always be enlarged or altered. At the same time the school building is greatly standardized, i.e. not only are regulations governing the dimensions of individual rooms drawn up by the authorities but structural elements from the frame of the building down to furniture are pre-fabricated in order to reduce construction time and to simplify renovations. The first stage of the school published here is intended to accommodate 1440 pupils with enlargement possibilities for an additional 720. In order to create an intimate atmosphere, the pupils are segregated into individual sections, and each section contains a large dining- and lounge room with kitchen. One group of 180 pupils has at its disposal four standard classrooms. In Type I there is in addition a division room, but this is lacking in Type II as the latter is devoted mainly to special subjects. The focus of the whole lay-out is the centrally situated assembly pavilion with large open courtyard, assembly hall with stage and extensive reading rooms and library. The

architectural firm of R. Sheppard Partners has considerable experience in school building and has done pioneer work in the standardization of rough structural elements and fittings.

Primary School at Herrängen near Stockholm (pages 278—280)

The problem was to build a sixteen-room elementary school in a suburb of the Swedish capital. The site is a mainly level area with a light stand of birches and pines, typical central Swedish landscape. Swedish schools always comprise a section where a school lunch is served. The cafeterias are often laid out in such a way and furnished with cloakrooms so that they serve at the same time as a club room or community hall for the local population. In our example this cafeteria adjoins the gymnasium. A small platform can be used as a stage. Cloakrooms, etc. are so disposed that a multi-purpose room is created. The classrooms are all of one storey and are grouped around a central courtyard. For every two classrooms there is a separate entrance from the courtyard so that intimate pupil groups are formed and undesirable massing is avoided. The classrooms have an approximately square plan and enjoy bilateral lighting. In a third building, which has three storeys, are situated all the special classrooms such as the boys' manual training room, along with a small wood storage place, and a display room for finished articles, and in addition the girls' handicrafts room with a supply room and a natural science room with two small collection rooms. By and large three materials are used in the construction of these buildings: The main material is untreated brick, used especially in the gable-ends and also in the entrance halls and in a part of the gymnasium, as well as the entire multi-storey section. The bases are covered with dark slate. The third principal material is natural wood windowscotting, used mainly above the windows and as classroom casements parapet covering. The untreated materials and the white-painted windows strike the authentic Swedish note. Despite a certain severity, this school is an excellent example of Scandinavian building.

Problems in American school construction (pages 281—284)

In the U.S.A. there are no school rooms available for over 2.2 million children. More than 3 million school-children between 7 and 16 go to school in hopelessly inadequate, provisional barracks or church premises, not to mention the alarming number of school buildings — in part survivals of pretentious Victorian architecture — which completely fail to measure up to modern educational and hygienic requirements. These data come from the National Education Association, Washington, D.C. The shortage of school facilities is on the increase, since the growth in the American population in recent years has registered record figures which the school building program can not keep up with. The resolution of this "quantitative" problem depends to a far-reaching extent on governmental subsidies as well as available school funds. None the less, the final solution will result from the openmindedness of school officials, especially with regard to the methods of education which are taking into account modern ways of living and technical progress, as well as from the foresight of architects in planning schools. In this respect the U.S.A. appears to be at the beginning of a trend which will have vast consequences in the field of school architecture. The conception of the school, which has gained ground over the last thirty years, that the school should not be a monument of the community, impressing the local citizens but striking fear into the hearts of the children, but should be dedicated to the service of the school-child, with its dimensions scaled down correspondingly, has meant that increasing attention has been devoted to the basic unit of the school, the individual classroom. The classroom has been released from the old rigid plan and over recent years has frequently been integrated into the new school conception in an organic fashion in accordance with its functions and constitutes, along with lighting and ventilation problems, the subject of numerous articles and addresses by educators and architects. And now suddenly, entirely new teaching methods are beginning to take shape. There is a trend to do away with the traditional 30—40 pupil classes and to introduce greater flexibility into class formation with very small and very large groups and to integrate the school and the community.

To what extent are construction, building materials, building costs and architectural expression being affected by this development? Leading American school architects like William Caudill and John Lyon Reid along with important educators like Professor Stoddard and others have paved the way for this development with their designs for the "School of Tomorrow" and are seeking answers to the above and other questions. Maximum flexibility can be achieved only by eliminating supporting interior walls, which to a great extent pre-supposes the use of steel or concrete skeleton construction. Almost more important than this "inner flexibility" of the American school is its external organic growth. As the American high school especially has manifold functions in the community, every future extension will give rise to a highly complex problem. The problems which the future will bring, which will demand courageous and large-scale solutions, present a splendid challenge in the field of American school architecture.

Primary School with Kindergarten at Kester Avenue in Los Angeles (pages 285—289)

This primary school with kindergarten on Kester Avenue in Los Angeles is a typical school building for a warm climate, where the winter corresponds to our spring and in summer the sun is so strong that the problem of shade assumes an overwhelming importance. For this reason blinds are a necessity on all windows, and all rooms have to be connected by covered passageways. In these climatic conditions open-air classes are a matter of course, and the window front of the classroom can be completely opened. The wide open landscape requires a self-contained plan leading to interior courtyards and high garden walls. Architect Neutra successfully confronted all these problems wherever he possibly could and with only simple means has created a lay-out with an intimate atmosphere and on a scale which is adapted to the children it is intended to serve. Here, as in other American school buildings, the structural elements are to a far-reaching extent standardized so that the architect has to arrange the given elements as best he can in order to achieve his purpose. Also the school is organized in such a way that it can be enlarged without further ado. Neutra says that a school can be compared with a modern factory in which all possibilities have to be left open to accommodate new production processes and re-organization. Owing to his experience with school buildings in warm-to-tropical climates, Neutra has been in demand outside America, in Puerto Rico and Guam.

Beverly Elementary School, Birmingham, Michigan U.S.A. (pages 290—291)

This example from America is a primary school for around 500 children accommodated in 12 classrooms. The plan of the school, a severe rectangle, is broken up by four cozy courtyards, which can be used as recess areas; another covered play area at the east end of the school is intended for bad weather. All the classrooms are directly accessible not only from outside but also from a corridor. The bilateral disposition of the windows makes for flexible rooms with uniform light. A canopy 2 m. wide along the entire building serves as a sunbreak and gives protection from the rain. The large multi-purpose room serves on the one hand as a gymnasium, on the other hand as a small theatre with a stage that can be raised and lowered. Tables and benches folding into the wall transform the room during the noon hour into a cafeteria. The scale of all the dimensions is adjusted to the 6-to-12 age group.

Luchswiesengraben Primary School, Zurich (pages 292—294)

The project was to erect a 12-room primary school with two rooms for girls' handicrafts, a music room and a gymnasium. The site is level, surrounded by 2- and 3-storey apartment houses. The main architectural idea here is the courtyard enclosed on three sides. The two-storey classroom section is on the south-east. Rooms lighted from one side in the traditional way are disposed along a corridor and are accessible from two entrances with stair-wells. On the south-west side is the special classroom section, also two storeys. And finally on the north-west side is the gymnasium, again two storeys. The whole complex is set back from the street giving the school a spacious lawn. The school is striking for its clarity of conception and severity.