

Summary

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Summary

Starkey House in Duluth, Minnesota (pages 411—415)

In this example Marcel Breuer took an ordinary assignment and made something boldly original and distinctive of it. His basic idea is as follows: Only the sections which are necessarily "tied to the ground", such as the garage and the heating unit, were to come in direct contact with the ground; all the other sections were to be cut off from the actual ground of the site and, so to speak, suspended in air. For this purpose he set up eight wooden pillars fixed in iron shoes, and tied these pillars together with a couple of glued wood girders each, one under the ground floor and one over the roof. The ceiling can therefore be freely suspended and given a completely smooth, seamless under surface. Breuer sought in designing this house to give expression to an architectural idea which has always been important to him, namely that buildings should be severely abstract and geometrical, as it were, and should be sharply distinguished from the wild, untamed aspects of physical nature and should have as little formal relationship to nature as possible. The house is really supported by only eight slight supports, for only one of the masonry walls reaches up to the floor joists. All the other walls come a few decimeters short of the ceiling, which gives the house its markedly hovering effect. A logical consequence of this basic conception is that the house is entered by footbridges like the gangplanks used to board a ship. The main footbridge leads up to a corridor connecting the two parts of the house. Typical of Breuer's designs are the horizontal sunbreaks suspended above the windows on the south side.

Osterstrand Villa at Vedbaek, Denmark (pages 416—419)

This house possesses a marvelous site directly on the Oeresund, the strait between Denmark and Sweden. It was designed for the owner and his family. The architect selected for the house proper an asymmetrical T-shaped plan with a long transverse section and a short central section. The ceiling above the ground floor consists of a reinforced concrete slab resting on steel I-supports. This renders possible the almost complete glazing of the ground floor rooms. The entire first floor consists of a timber framework construction. All the windows are glazed with double or triple compound panes. The large sliding window frames on the ground floor are of teak. The insulating material utilized in the ceilings and walls is for the most part glass wool. The ceilings on the inside are constructed mainly of narrow, ornamental chamfer beading. There is beautiful rough-cut natural stone on the terraces, in the entrance court and in the light, airy stair-well. In this way inside and outside form a harmonious unity.

Double House at Drottningholm near Stockholm (pages 420—424)

Drottningholm is one of the many large islands in the immediate vicinity of Stockholm, which, owing to the enormous expansion of the residential areas of the city, have become in effect outlying districts of the city proper. Our double house is situated in meadows sloping gently north to Lake Mälaren, a site which has a stand of large oaks and which is not far from Drottningholm Palace. The house is occupied by a bachelor and a

family with three children. Although the architects had at their disposal two thousand square meters of ground, they decided nevertheless on a very simple rectangular plan. There are included in this rectangular plan two interior gardens resembling patios. The bachelor's home takes up around two-fifths of the whole house and is disposed in an L-shape along two sides of its patio. The larger house encloses the second small courtyard on three sides. What is true of the plan also applies to the overall appearance: it is a simple cube of the utmost severity of design. The roof appears in the elevation as an approximately 50 cm. cornice. The patios have proved to be most practical, since one can sit in them even in cooler spring and autumn weather owing to the complete protection from the wind. The effect of severe simplicity is adhered to in detail, as in the floors, ceilings and walls: a great deal of wood has been employed, even for the kitchen floors. A markedly homely effect is achieved in the kitchens by the generous use of wood on ceilings, walls and furniture. A plastic pipe was run under the roof to water the lawn of the patio in the larger house. The fine spray which results serves to cool the entire house during hot summer weather. The outside walls are in "Ytong", one of the two widely used Swedish gas concrete materials. The blocks are merely white-washed outside and inside. The roof structure is of wood, insulated with rock wool. The ceilings are pine boarding. The roof itself consists of two layers of felt reinforced with glass fibre with ready-to-apply roofing felt on top. Roof provided with internal drainage. The houses have hot-air heating.

Experimental House for Prefabricated Steel Elements in Palo Alto, California (pages 425—427)

This recently completed house in California shows how an able architect can avoid the cut-and-dried approach in tackling an unusual assignment—in this case the erection of an experimental house of prefabricated steel elements. The house consists entirely, with the exception of a few installation elements, of prefabricated parts: A 1500 sq. ft. reinforced concrete slab was poured on the site. On this seven piers of light steel I-sections were set up and poured. On these piers there is placed a roof element of folding sheet metal insulated with glass wool. The house possesses three types of exterior wall elements: they all consist of steel frames but with three different kinds of wall material: (1) glass as fixed pane covering entire wall or as sliding door, from floor to ceiling, (2) plywood and (3) corrugated glass fibre plastic.

The fittings of the house are likewise prefabricated, such as cupboards, kitchen furniture, inside partitions. In the plan the entrance, the kitchen and two bathrooms are located on the north side, three small bedrooms on the west and south, the big living-room, open to the kitchen, on the south-east, with a dining nook cut off from the kitchen by a cupboard. The garage is attached on the east side.

Single-family house at Grünwald near Munich (pages 428—430)

This is an elongated site running north and south, the street passing on the north end. An angle in the street is utilized to create an entrance court, the main front entrance and the door being staggered. The house is flush on both sides with the boundaries of the property, but this creates protection for the garden laid out on the south side of the house. There are only three openings giving on to the street: the door, the entrance to the court and the garage door. Thus the living area is secluded from the street. The grounds are sharply divided into front garden, courtyard, interior courtyard and outdoor lounging area. The exterior walls consist of 15 or 20 cm. thick Hebel gas concrete blocks, the supporting interior walls of 11.5 cm. bricks. The leanto roof, drained to the north, and very flat is constructed of a 10 cm. thick reinforced concrete slab rendered below or, above the living area, with wood boarding. On top there are 3 cm. thick bitumen-treated cork slabs and 2 layers of roofing felt. The courtyard walls are of untreated concrete. The house is white, which contrasts with the untreated concrete of the courtyard walls and the chimney as well as the west and south wall of the garage with their bright red masonry.

Residence and Studio of a sculptor and architect at Vedbaek, Denmark (pages 431—433)

This house is really a small group of units connected by masonry walls. It has a cross-shaped plan, the transverse section housing on opposite sides the living-room and kitchen and the bedrooms, with the two-storey studio above the transverse section. The two walls which intersect each other are of unrendered lime sandstone. This stone also appears inside in the raw unfinished state, unrendered, giving an effect of severe simplicity. The interior walls are either entirely in glass or are partitions built up of individual panel elements. The studio, in contrast to the living area, is constructed entirely of wood. It has glass walls reaching from floor to ceiling on the south and east, and commands an extensive view. This little complex of buildings situated in green meadows has a clean geometrical severity and is sharply set off from its natural surroundings. A strip of woodland provides a wind and weather-break on the north and north-west.

House of a advertising expert at Itznach near Zurich (page 434)

The owner is a fisherman and sports enthusiast and his two sons are jazz fans; therefore he took immediately to the idea of a tent-shaped house. Everything is disposed around the spacious living room. It is lighted by a large studio window reaching to the slope of the roof and taking up the entire south wall. This big room is entered directly, and it is connected by half a flight of steps up to the bedrooms and half a flight down to the dining nook. The small west window lends a particularly intimate note to the corner seating area with its bookshelves, because in contrast to the immense south window it almost seems like a porthole on a ship.

Housing Development in the Alberti, Davos-Platz (page 435)

A colony of four housing developments is planned on a south slope on the outskirts of Davos-Platz. As the site is a steeply sloping one, the architects took the liberty of proposing a bold lay-out in which every 3 or 5 houses are to be built in step formation and in part shoved right under one another. This arrangement would for each house create on the roof of the house immediately below a large terrace facing south and east, catching the sun and commanding an extensive view. On the north side the houses are to be provided with solid brick walls, but with ample window space on the south side. It is planned to construct the south wall of the bedroom area of wood.

Project for a single-family house at Vorderhindelang (pages 436—437)

This is a plan for a small convenient house for an elderly married couple. The site is on a steep south slope with a magnificent view of the Allgäu mountains. The house is for the most part to be constructed of wood and steel owing to the high cost of masonry work in the locality. The basic structure consists of a framework of three steel frames welded together, with laterally projecting arms, along with the timber framing of the gable ends and the roof structure of wood beams. The interior partitions are likewise planned to be of timber framing, only the chimney and fireplace and the longitudinal wall to be built of whitewashed clinker masonry. The house is to be given plenty of window space on the south side, with a wide sliding door opening on to the terrace. A corresponding skylight runs along the north side. Fixed panes are being planned except for the sliding door and a few casements. The parapet panels on the south and north sides are to be formed of shining white asbestos-cement tiles. Both gable ends are to be of boarding, and the outside doors and cornice of water-tight ends. In order to make up for the loss of heat through the large expanse of glass, the exterior walls and the attic ceiling are provided with extra insulation. Prewanol is intended as roofing material. The flat roof has an internal drainage system to avoid ice damage to the cornices. The house has hot water heat with an oil-burner.

Project for a single-family house at Starnberger See (page 438)

The site is an elevated one high up on the slope on the west side of the Starnberger See. The house is rectangular and has the outside dimensions 22.50 m. x 9.40 m. In order to have an unimpeded view over the neighbour's woodland the house was suspended in a steel frame structure. The central section on the ground floor is not a supporting element and houses only a guest room, the owner's apartment and the entrance. The supporting structure consists of 5 steel girder frameworks. Each of the latter consists of three perpendicular supports and two cross pieces at the level of the ceilings on both floors, the ceilings being of reinforced concrete rib structure between the girders and projecting at the narrow ends of the house. Thus the upper ceiling forms a kind of concrete awning over the lounging terrace. The outer steel supports are clearly visible in front of the long sides of the house. The non-supporting exterior walls of the first floor are double so that windows and shutters can be shoved sideways between the two wall elements.

New Apartments with modern furniture in the Old Town of Berne (pages 440—441)

A number of medieval houses were renovated in the oldest district of Berne. There were created livable one-, two- and three-room apartments with the most up-to-date furnishings, the apartments being rented along with their furniture. Theo Jakob's furniture strives to be severely simple. Despite his ascetic severity, Jakob has succeeded in creating a homelike atmosphere, which is brought about essentially by the design and colour schemes of his fabrics. The whole project is a happy example of what can be done in the way of modernizing an Old Town.

New German Office Furniture (pages 442—443)

In this project furniture was to be developed which could be integrated into any conceivable type of office. The key-note is flexibility permitting immediate adaptation to all sorts of new organizational problems as they arise. In this way the furnishings could grow, as it were, with the expanding concern. These examples show combinable element furniture, particular stress being laid on desks and cabinet elements. The cabinets include units with standard files as well as with built-in filing devices for handy and space-saving storing of records. The cabinet elements can not only be assembled side by side but one on top of the other so as to form entire wall-high cases.