

Summary

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Summary

Seagram's, New York (pages 1—8)

"Seagram's Building" or simply "375" is the popular name of the most recent work by Mies van der Rohe in New York. This means that the creation at Park Avenue 375, though but recently completed, has already become a byword. It is located diagonally across from Lever House, that other point of orientation in the architectural welter of New York. The 38-storey tower structure of bronze and glass is situated on a square with pink granite flagging. The access is flanked by two pools. Beech-trees are planted on the narrow ends of the skyscraper. A long, narrow canopy characterizes the entrance. The lobby 7.30 m. high behind the rows of columns faced with bronze strikes the observer as a complex, spacious, plastic structure, especially at night when the walls of the utility shafts covered with travertine are flooded with light. The building radiates imposing serenity owing to the power and the discipline embodied in the construction, the perfect proportions of all the parts and the carefully conceived play of colours, light and shadows. The primary function of the Seagram's Building is to represent the prestige of its owners and tenants. The office premises as well as the exterior meet the very highest requirements. The wishes of many occupants have been complied with in the arrangement of their offices. In the interior finishing a whole series of construction methods, procedures and materials have been brought to such a stage of improvement that they are in part now being mass-produced. Instead of the permissible 92,000 sq. m., only 46,000 sq. m. of utility area have been created. Although the rents are about 50% higher (80 as against 55 dollars per sq. m.), 90% of the disposable offices were rented two months after completion. The occupants have concluded contracts running for at least 10 years. The 2500 sq. m. site cost 2 1/4 million dollars, the construction costs including the lay-out of the square and the furnishing of the offices come to 43 million dollars. Nevertheless the rents bring in more than maintenance costs, taxes and interest charges combined; in the first year it will come to 400,000 dollars or 13% of the owner's capital.

City Hall at Marl (pages 9—12) Competition Design 1957

Marl has grown within 70 years from 3385 to 88,000 inhabitants. The scattered districts of this community on the way to becoming a big city, which are not tied to an Old Town, are not to be integrated around a business centre but around a garden city. Social and cultural institutions and the City Government are to be accommodated in this City. In the City Hall Competition van den Broek and Bakema's plan was awarded the 1st Prize. The accesses for pedestrians and vehicles were prescribed according to the town plan of Günther Marschall. It is a well-known fact that the designs of the two Rotterdamers are "hard" and the architecture consistently based on function and construction. It is for this reason that they are often criticized in the daily press in the Netherlands—most severely by architects. Judging by this line of argument, the architecture of van den Broek and Bakema is cold and inhuman. We are familiar with the Lijnbaan in Rotterdam, many other buildings and some suburban and village plans, and we are of the opinion that nowhere in Central Europe are there incorporated a greater range of human values than in the work of van den Broek and Bakema. One of the very best examples of this is the design of the City Hall of Marl. This appears clearly in the line of reasoning and in the style of the explanatory text—despite editing in

the interests of ready intelligibility. It is revealed especially in the plans which we recommend for the reader's careful perusal. The welter of official departments and offices can be surveyed at a glance. The vehicle and the pedestrian traffic are with a few exceptions kept separate all the way into the building. The inner significance inherent in the individual groups of rooms and spatial units is meaningfully integrated, and revealed in the architectural design. This building, eschewing all pretentiousness, may truly serve as the architectural focus of the city.

Administration Building of the Hospital Insurance Service, Gross-Gerau (pages 14—17)

The building is situated on the market square, which is closed in on three sides by buildings that are not uniform in architecture. The architects first planned the six-storey slab-shaped City Hall and then the two-storey Hospital Insurance Building on the fourth side as detached structures. In order to give the square a plastic form in keeping with the detached buildings, the lower building ought to have been planned to project into the square beyond the prescribed building line. This proposal was not accepted by the authorities, and thus the City Hall and the Insurance Building now stand detached behind a building line conceived for a closed plan. The result is a completely mongrel effect, and the chance to allow for the meaningful evolution of the square in the coming decades has been lost. The offices are disposed around a courtyard measuring 14.00 x 5.50 m. in a two-storey structure. The building, which projects freely above basement level, the reinforced concrete skeleton and the entrance elevation would lead one to expect completely glazed walls all around the outside. However, the east and west elevations are closed in and broken by narrow rows of windows; the west elevation is closed in despite the fact that the same offices are located there as behind the glazed walls. The entrance is added on to the cubic structure of the building; behind, there is located a parking place for vehicles accessible by ramp. Above the windows of the north and south elevations there are attached cleaning terraces which on the south side also serve as sunbreaks. The courtyard windows on the first floor can be cleaned from a similar terrace, because unlike those on the ground-floor they are recessed behind the concrete supports.

New Building of the Meat Packer's Association, Heidelberg (pages 18—20)

The building plan is characterized by the flexibility of the various functions. There had to be included in the plan:

1. Offices, Employees' rooms, Sales and display room for butchers' equipment;
2. Sales room for meat, liver, kidneys, etc., air-conditioned curing plant, Hides delivery and records;
3. Cold storage rooms;
4. Supply and store rooms for sales and for hides as well as a room for salting hides;
5. Garages and loading ramp;
6. Deposit department of a bank.

On one of the two adjacent streets is located the sales and display room, on the other are the offices, housed on two floors. All the rooms indicated by 2 are accessible from the courtyard, since the customers have to drive their cars directly up to the individual departments. The cold storage rooms are located in the centre of the building. The site measures only 35 x 35 m. For this reason it was necessary to provide basements under the entire area, including the courtyard. As it is possible to drive completely around the main building, even the largest trucks can drive up to the loading ramp without inconvenience. A hydraulic lift runs from the loading ramp into the basement. Besides, a ramp for electric trucks runs directly from the courtyard into the rooms in the basement indicated by 3. The entire building is constructed of concrete, since any other building material would soon be corroded by the salt used in the operations. The walls are not rendered either inside or outside. All the installation ducts including the radiant heating are sealed in concrete and thereby insulated against salt corrosion.

Central Office of the German Weather Bureau, Offenbach a. M. (pages 21—23)

Under the jurisdiction of the German Weather Bureau are the weather offices which are distributed throughout the German Federal Republic. In addition to the

administration, scientific and technical departments are attached to the Bureau. 400 officials and employees are engaged in the following departments:

1. General Administration
2. Synoptic Department
3. Climatology Department
4. Farm Service
5. Research Department
6. Weather Broadcasting Bureau
7. Weather Office

There was available as building site a large area to be kept as park-land. On the south the site is bounded and served by Frankfurterstrasse and on the north by Löwenstrasse. A 5-storey, 100 m. long main section running north and south is intersected by a one-storey, wider transverse section of approximately the same length. At the intersection are located the lobby and the main stairwell, the lifts and the toilets. Above the east wing rise the 3-storey, hexagonal book stacks. The main section contains essentially on the 4th floor offices and the weather broadcasting bureau. The lower transverse section comprises the library, reading room, the Hollerith department with punched card files, an auditorium, the printing shop and the dining-room and kitchen. Since offices of varying heights were required, the halls of the main section are not situated in the centre. The closed in central area of the transverse section contains essentially completely air-conditioned files and an auditorium with a seating capacity of 100. In front of the dining-room (seating capacity 120) there is, on the side facing the park, a large terrace. The windows are set in the continuously reinforced exterior skin running from floor to floor. The stairwell in the intersection of the four wings is glazed on the east and west; the supporting elements are disposed on the inside. The supporting elements are similarly arranged in the low-lying wing so that continuous rows of windows could be installed. In the case of the book stacks the load of the open seam stanchion system is assumed by a reinforced concrete foundation platform resting on reinforced concrete bulkheads (the walls of the rooms below). The extensive installation conduits are housed in the unrendered ceilings which are painted a dark shade. The fluorescent tubes for lighting the halls are installed between the batten strips.

Office Building in Geneva (pages 24 to 26)

This office building is located on the Route de Cointrin near the airport. It contains, on the ground-floor, offices and a kitchen. In the basement, accessible by a ramp or an interior stairway, there are situated store rooms and garages, the heating plant and two lavatories. Three steel section frames 16 m. long are set up on the concrete walls of the basement. On the lower framework girders is placed the concrete ceiling of the basement, which projects on all sides by about 3.40 m. 20 cm. beneath the upper girders steel I-beams are suspended, which support the roof and ceiling construction. The windows or the closed in wall elements are built into metal frames measuring 1.25 x 2.50 m. The wall elements are made up, from the outside toward the inside, of the following: asbestos-cement slabs, thermal insulation, aluminium facing. The single pane windows are shielded by exterior blinds. The wooden boarding of the roof is covered with aluminium strips. Natural pine beading is used for the ceilings. The heating ducts for the radiant floor heating system are cast in the floor foundation. The flooring surface is linoleum.

Small Bank at Manhattan Beach, California (pages 27—32)

Two entrances, a large teller's window hall and the safe deposit department on the ground-floor, the management office, a lounge and a small kitchen on the first floor make up the organization plan. What gives this building its special architectural distinction are the spatial proportions, simple construction and the way in which the surfaces of the ceilings, walls and floors are handled, the way in which the colour scheme and the lighting effects are carried out. Structural details are treated with the same care and thoroughness as in a Swiss building, the Swiss being famous for painstaking attention to details. In the case of Ellwood, however, details are kept subordinated in every case to the broad interplay of volumes and surfaces (See Design Sheet).