

Zeitschrift: Bauen + Wohnen = Construction + habitation = Building + home : internationale Zeitschrift

Herausgeber: Bauen + Wohnen

Band: 15 (1961)

Heft: 2

Rubrik: Summary

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

Download PDF: 08.01.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Summary

Hideo Kosaka

Postal Savings Bank in Nagoya (pages 38–42)

The building of the Savings Bank in Nagoya is by the same architect as that in Kyoto, which was dealt with in Issue 1/1960. In both cases we find the same style and the same conception.

Gollins, Melvin and Ward

"Castrol" House (pages 45–49)

800 employees work in this 15-storey building. Aside from the offices, the building in question contains two restaurants, various exhibition and conference rooms, a cinema and several garages. Certain details and construction principles of this building are not new, but they are nonetheless original. The elevations, the construction in general and the plan of the building are well conceived. The technical installations (heating, air-conditioning, etc.) are effectively worked out. An automatic lighting system permits constant illumination of the work premises, regulated in advance.

Eckhard Schulze-Fielitz and Ernst von Rudloff

Administration Building of the "Landschaftsverband Rheinland" in Cologne (pages 50–53)

The "Landschaftsverband Rheinland" is an entity which concerns itself with the interests of district governments and municipalities. The plan in question was carried out on a competition basis. The two winners, two young architects less than 30 years old have succeeded in creating one of the best office buildings in Germany. The influence of Mies van der Rohe on this project is very definite, without for all that diminishing its value. However, in the plan, the celebrated clarity of the master has not been achieved everywhere. Certain details are not clearly motivated; nevertheless, it can be said that the construction is honest and technically correct.

Alfons Barth and Hans Zaugg

Administration Building of Ideal Standard at Dulliken (pages 54–55)

This building is distinguished by its astonishing simplicity of construction, disposition and organization. Depth of large offices: 7.30 meters; span of pillars on upper floors: 1.50 meters. High pressure ventilation system combined with an acoustic ceiling. Two supplementary floors can be added to the building in question.

James Cubitt

Administration Building in Accra (pages 56–57)

Four administration buildings, a bank and a shopping center had been envisaged by the architect in 1953. At the present time two administration buildings, the bank, the building in ill. 3 left and a raised house with square plan have been erected. The sun-breaks on the elevations give essential definition to both the exterior and interior character of the building.

Craig Ellwood

A Post Office Building, successful despite the Ready-Made Plan (pages 58–60)

This building gives us an opportunity to devote a few moments to an architectural theme that is out of the ordinary. The publications which concern themselves with architecture in the U.S.A., in fact, hardly ever throw any light on a certain type of architecture in this country the quality of which is far inferior to that of Europe. Which fact clearly does not prevent the

few rare good American examples, published for Europe, from being definitely superior to our standard.

The example published here illustrates the system employed by the U.S. Post Office Department: a ready-made plan of a post office building, entirely "prefabricated," is placed in the hands of a "general contractor," who carries out the whole project, from the first working plan to the final completion of the actual building—and this without calling in an architect. The result is in correspondence with the system: all post office buildings have the same look and, what's more, their quality is deplorable. Our example is special in that the contractor called in an architect—for a reason that escapes us. This building proves that a well-conceived structure is not always anti-economic.

As a general rule, the elevations of pre-planned buildings of this sort are made up of "walls and holes" without any account being taken of the special requirements of the given problem. This time, however, the U.S. Post Office Department made several concessions to the architect as regards the arrangement of the entrance, the disposition of the lobby and the stamp windows, the colours and the distribution of the windows. The specifications of this Department are generally extremely severe. Here, the building "must" follow the curve of the street; the elevation of other post offices must be painted grey up to a height of 1.50 meters and pale green above! Such regulations will no doubt make us appreciate the rulings in force in Good Old Europe!

The steel skeleton painted white of this post office building is faced with concrete slabs (painted delft-blue).

Hertzka & Knowles; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

Crown-Zellerbach Building in San Francisco (pages 61–66)

The building in question, sited in the middle of the business district of San Francisco, is erected on an area measuring 54 ares. One half of the premises are occupied by the firm of Zellerbach itself, the other half is let. Building sites are extremely expensive here, and yet, just as in the case of Lever House, the owner has not utilized 100% of his site, as he would have been permitted to do by the building code. Only 1/3 of the site is occupied by the building, the other 2/3 being placed at the disposal of the general public.

In the garden, which is sunk below street level, there is located the administration building of the American Trust Company Bank. Nearly all the basement level, taking up most of the site, is reserved for parking, with a total capacity for 150 cars. The building is a metallic skeleton faced with a curtain wall. This construction system for elevations is an absolute novelty in San Francisco. The disposition of the windows and offices is based on the module of 5 feet 6 in. The main pillars have a span of 22 feet; the depth dimension, corresponding to the actual depth of the building itself, comes to 60 feet. Each office unit of 6 feet 6 in. has all necessary electric and telephone outlets. The windows are fitted with slightly greenish absorbent glass.

Paul Hofer

Le Corbusier and Town Planning (pages 67–72)

The work of Charles-Edouard Jeanneret as a whole is not easily decipherable, it is not comparable to the work of a master of the 20th century like, e.g., Braque. The discontinuity and the "metamorphoses" of Le Corbusier are to be matched only in the work of Picasso. The study of the works of these two men is a veritable labyrinth full of meanders and obstacles. Jeanneret, who has been known as Le Corbusier since 1920—in this he followed the example of one of his Huguenot ancestors—is, southern French on his father's side and of the Jura on his mother's side, which comes from Neuchâtel. At the present time he is naturalized French. His birthplace, La Chaux-de-Fonds, is of almost no importance in his life.

In one word it could be said that Le Corbusier is the classic type of the Western European "Latin." And yet by defining "latin" as rationalist, doctrinaire purist or systematically intellectual, we realize that we come nowhere near the essential nature of the work of Le Corbusier. In fact from the point of view of exactitude and intellectual discipline, Gropius and Mies van der Rohe surpass him by far. Le Corbusier is a cartesian, but he possesses, perhaps, other still more powerful weapons: he is persevering, stubborn even, intractable, willful, accusing and modest at once. His talents are multiple: he possesses a critical mind and the soul of a

poet; he is paradoxical and logical both at once; above all he is creative.

Le Corbusier, just like Hofmannsthal, creates for social man; the individual as such hardly interests him. Le Corbusier's occasional private family houses are clear evidence of this. Likewise his ecclesiastical buildings: he builds cloisters, i.e., communal buildings. Finally, he is tackling the most complex communal project of all: the City. This is the aspect of his work that we should like to take up at this juncture: Le Corbusier and Town Planning.

On this point it will be necessary to distinguish two different tendencies: one is involved in individual town-planning projects, the other is concerned with the City as an integral phenomenon. And it is precisely this synthetic phenomenon, this complex totality, that has to be studied in detail in the case of Le Corbusier. For him the City is neither economic in its essential nature, political, sociological nor technical. For Le Corbusier the plan itself generates the City, the plan is thus in itself creative above all else; in his work "Towards an Architecture", he says: "Architecture is above all utilitarian considerations." Le Corbusier, to be sure, is engaged in realizing actual projects; he is concerned with such aspects as traffic problems, social hygiene or the guaranteeing of adequate sunshine, but Le Corbusier has never applied Taylorism to problems of the City; for him the fusion of idea and practical realization is primordial in the sense of a purifying creation. In his work "Radiant City," 1935, he says "Plans are monuments of rationality and lyricism erected in the midst of contingencies."

In order to understand Le Corbusier as a town planner, it will be necessary for us to distinguish certain stages in town planning. In the 19th century big cities expand beyond their fortifications, green zones and great boulevards replace the old walls and ramparts wherever the authorities are far-seeing.

The astonishing and unprecedented growth of urban populations during the industrial revolution leads to certain extreme tendencies: the great arterial avenues of Haussmann (Paris) envisaged to control the movement of great masses of people, etc. Later on the growth of cities becomes an uncontrollable flood, the solutions proposed remain theoretical; practical projects do not really come to grips with the central problem, they are measures of mere expediency, blind alleys: on the one hand, escape into the horizontal solution (English garden cities) in the open countryside, on the other hand, escape into the vertical dimension (the first skyscrapers in Chicago in 1879). These two ways out come nowhere near ameliorating the condition of our cities. At the end of the 19th century, a pseudo-individualism seeks to dodge the pressing need for town planning on a grand scale: Auguste Perret, Scott; only problems of detail are resolved. The city as a residential centre, a centre of activity and of repose, remains an abstraction in the planning stage. The 15 months Le Corbusier spends with Auguste Perret are crowded with plans and ideas. Two main conceptions will be developed there: that of "tower cities," a general idea envisaging gigantic metropolises, and that of the skeleton, his first vision of buildings on piling. These first studies of 1915 (Domino Buildings), traffic 4 or 5 meters above ground level, utility services on ground floor, etc., (cf. ill. 1) are altogether typical of Le Corbusier. This is the period of "foliated streets," 1920, of the City of three million inhabitants, at the Salon de l'Automne in 1922, and of the "Plan Voisin" for the city of Paris to follow these first experiments (cf. ill. 2). For the first time the integral problem of a city of three million inhabitants is taken seriously.

Another problem of paramount importance occupies Le Corbusier from his earliest years on: that of housing. As early as 1907 the "Cité industrielle" of Tony Garnier makes a profound impression on him. Again it is around 1920 that he creates his first projects in the field of housing: "Immeubles-villas," housing estate of Audincourt on the Doubs (ill. 3), Pessac estate near Bordeaux in 1925 with which begins the history of the modern residential district (cf. ill. 4). He does little in this field but what he does is revolutionary, whereas the problem of the total City remains "hermetically sealed."

There then follows a literary period after his first buildings: "Towards an Architecture" in 1923, "Town Planning" in 1925, "Particulars" in 1930, "The Radiant City" in 1935. The reaction of the public is either warmly enthusiastic or moderate or fraught with hatred. Although the period around 1920 is marked by many requests to undertake town planning assignments

in Africa, Belgium, Sweden, Spain, Russia, South America, etc., hatred, and the anti-Le Corbusier movement, long persist: Algiers, 1931–34; Antwerp (cf. ill. 6); project for the CIAM (cf. ill. 7); University City of Rio de Janeiro (ill. 8); in 1929, master plan of Buenos Aires, and others. The years to follow are dominated by the Spanish Civil War. Nevertheless, it can be said without exaggeration that the years 1922–42 are dedicated without interruption to the problems of town planning, from the housing unit to the "cartesian metropolis."

The line of development from Audincourt to Buenos Aires represents the "Latin tendency" of Le Corbusier as a town planner. Another facet of Le Corbusier, which could be called "Greek," is likewise perceptible in his work. From the very beginning the achievements of classical art have fascinated him: the Certosa of Galluzzo, south of Florence, the Acropolis of Athens. "The Parthenon, why, I never would have believed it to be possible!" he writes to his friend August Klipstein in 1911 (cf. ill. 9). In 1911 he sketches the forum of Pompeii (cf. ill. 10 and 11) and at Tivoli. It is the Greek element that enthralled him even in Roman architecture. His "civic centres" bear witness to this.

In a studio founded along with a number of young architects. Le Corbusier in 1943 resumes his studies of proportions. The result is his publication in 1948 and 1955 of the "Modulor" based on the principle of the golden rule. From this time on, most of his work is influenced by this doctrine of proportion and harmonious dimensions. Gradually the theory of the vertical city crystallizes: the "Unité d'habitation" scaled to human dimensions is an example of it.

According to Le Corbusier, "tentacular cities" can avoid chaos only by expanding in the vertical dimension; in this way the ground can be kept free for pedestrians and vehicular traffic. Every "unité d'habitation" is again a communal grouping, a kind of city within a city. The first world-famous project: Marseille, the second: Nantes-Rézé, etc. It is only around this time that Le Corbusier the planner becomes a builder of cities. In 1947–50 he works out the "pilot plan" of Bogotá; here for the first time he applies the principle of "urban sectors." In 1950, in November, Le Corbusier signs the most important contract of his career: this concerns the new city of Chandigarh at the foot of the Himalayas. This city will accommodate in its final stage a population of 500 000. The planning unit is a rectangle measuring 800 by 1200 meters (cf. ill. 17 and 18). Most of Le Corbusier's theories are here applied: "The raw materials of town planning are sunshine, space, greenness, steel and reinforced concrete, in this order and in this hierarchical relation." The principles of urban sectors, the CIAM planning grid, the modulator, etc., are all applied.

Chandigarh is part of a long series of town planning projects beginning in Greece, continuing in Rome and eventuating in our historical epoch in Philadelphia (1683) and in Washington (1795). Le Corbusier exclaims: "Once more, town planning emerges from the womb of the centuries." The art of building entire cities had been lost since the baroque period (residential cities). Even today, out of 100 projects only one perhaps will be realized. God knows if this sole project will be successful. It may be that the city of tomorrow will no longer be a city as we know it. In the U.S.A. a trend in this direction is already becoming apparent. Perhaps the city of tomorrow will be a discontinuous pattern coagulating, as it were, about shopping centers or again about industrial centers, spread out over a landscape of enormous dimensions. In some places there can be found vast parking lots; between New York and Washington a super-city is now emerging: Megalopolis. As early as 1930 Le Corbusier speaks of a movement of deurbanization.

No architect of our age has recognized the perils latent in our civilization with so much pertinence as Le Corbusier; it is with the weapons of an architect and of a writer that Le Corbusier has felt compelled to describe this state of affairs: he has produced abundant manifestos, books, programmes and lectures.

In 1945 the town planning ideas of Le Corbusier become an integral spatology, he concerns himself from then on with "unités" of agricultural production, i.e., with the entire landscape. His cartesian principle of "order, distribution and composition" is to be encountered everywhere. For Le Corbusier as for Socrates it can be said: "For us Greeks, all things are forms." For Le Corbusier—we mean here his main thesis—town planning is also above all else "form," the most noble aim of any organization of space. Le Corbusier attaches but a subsidiary importance to function.