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The One-Family House, a Town-Planning Problem

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by *Benedikt Huber*

In spite of the scarcity and high cost of building lots, there is no let-up in the construction of one-family houses. Their occupants are no doubt glad to have homes of their own, but from the point of view of town-planning, this development gives rise to a rather delicate problem. Nearly everywhere, in fact, the lack of adequate space on the sites and the necessity also of meeting the personal and aesthetic requirements (which are perfectly justified) of the owners have conspired to deprive new private housing districts of architectural unity. To be sure, some cities and towns have sought to counter this architectural confusion by issuing a whole series of building regulations. In most cases, the result is merely increased dullness. In reality, this evil can not be remedied by a jumble of legal provisions, because the confusion in housing is simply a manifestation of the profound lack of spiritual unity in our age. The cities and villages dating from the Middle Ages, all of which are architecturally harmonious, grew up without benefit of building regulations. In our day all we can do is to suggest a few partial remedies: in the first instance, architects could be more modest in their plans for such a small-scale venture as a private home (a simpler architectural idiom would be less apt to introduce a discordant note into the given district), and, then, private homes could be disposed in fours or sixes, which would make possible larger lawn space and provide more ample views over the surrounding landscape. There is no doubt that when the lots do not belong to one single owner, the latter conception is bound to run into difficulties. But it is surely worthwhile to hold to this method in the application of which the architect would make more of a name for himself than by the isolated creation of a private home no matter how original and even daring it may be.

Residence of a Businessman at Herisau

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1955-56; *E. Brantschen, arch. FAS/SIA, St. Gall*

This large house is situated on a hill overlooking Herisau, contains 12 rooms and is designed both for intimate family life and for formal receptions. The house was set boldly into the hillside so as to avoid any effect of disproportionate size in relation to the surrounding landscape. The section given over to the children's bedrooms can later on be converted into a separate apartment. Construction centered around the large living-room with gallery and fireplace. - Cost: 151.50 Fr. per cubic m.

House at Küsnacht near Zurich

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1955; *arch. W. Custer, Zurich, in collaboration with G. Crespo, arch. SIA, Zurich*

The cozy sitting-room with fireplace leads into the large open section, then, above, to the dining nook and garden, one flower bed of which extends right into the house.

One-Family House at Skövde (Sweden)

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1955, *H. E. Heinemann, arch. SAR, Skövde*

Architect's own house, erected in a district crowded with buildings, but privacy is assured by disposition around closed courtyard. No basement.

House with Studio in Wollishofen-Zurich

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W. Boesiger, arch., Zurich

Intended for a photographer, this house on the edge of a park is characterized by its "open" rooms; the gallery on the first floor, leading into the studio, is used for taking pictures. The architect has made generous use of asbestos-cement.

House at Turramurra (Australia)

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Harry Seidler, arch., Sydney

This is a small house in the midst of the bush, for a family of three. The building is erected on a raised foundation so as to open up a more expansive view across the splendid landscape. Living area: 36 x 16 feet. The large room combining the functions of living-room, dining-room and study is on the same level with a covered terrace the canopy of which gives protection from the sun in summer and admits sunlight in winter. Although the dimensions are modest, the whole is designed in such a way (sliding doors) as to give an impression of roominess.

The Gardens of the Pedregal de San Angel in Mexico City

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The Pedregal is a bed of lava deposited in the valley of Mexico thousands of years ago by an eruption of the Xithe; today it resembles the frozen waves of an ocean. The architect Luis Barragan has created on this site these marvellous gardens which are kept in harmony with the volcanic rock. The houses - all of modern design - in this residential area (there are now about fifty of them) must not break the lava bed and, moreover, their ground area must not exceed 10% of the area of their own garden. There has been no attempt here to humanize nature, it being felt that nature exists in her own right, even in her strangest manifestations.

Max Bill and the Synthesis

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by *Will Grohmann*

As far back as the time of the First World War Kandinsky in Moscow had meditated on the problem of the integration of the arts and the sciences, and, in Munich, he thought of following up the "Blaue Reiter" with a second volume focused precisely on this question. Moreover, the conception of a synthesis was also one of the perennial ideas of the "Bauhaus". In the course of the methodical experiments which, until quite recently, he was able to carry out in Ulm, Max Bill has endeavoured to lay the sociological and the aesthetic foundations of this integration, which ought to inspire future ideas of design. The same endeavour is evident in his ventures in pure art, as could be seen on the occasion of the recent exhibition of his work in Ulm, Munich, Duisburg and Hagen. Two facts come to the fore: no aspect of these progressive works has dated and, moreover, the prerogative of each of the works, which consists not in imitating but in "being", is based on the fact that creative expression is here always synonymous with intelligence. This concrete art is both meditation and intuition of essence (Bill has written an essay on mathematical thought in art) and tends to be a manifestation of what is, here and now - or essential reality.

A Monument

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by *Max Bill*

Giving his own definition of what he has sought to achieve in his plan of the "Monument of the Unknown Political Prisoner" presented in the competition organized in 1953 by the Institute of Contemporary Arts of London, Max Bill discusses: 1. The conception: the 3-ribbed column is a symbol of spiritual resistance, as the open space all around symbolizes freedom. 2. The design: from the outside, closed-in group of three cubes around a 3-ribbed column. In contrast to the traditional plastic conception, the space or volume obtained is essentially: a) towards the outside, decisive, elemental and closed; b) from within, open all around. 3. Execution: the chromium-plated nickel column polished like a mirror; the cubes, on the outside, are of dark granite; on the inside, of white marble. Around the monument, benches of grey granite. Outside dimension of the cubes: 4 m.

Giorgio Morandi

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by *Hans-Friedrich Geist*

Giorgio Morandi was born in 1890 in Bologna, where he continues to reside. The author of this article takes up a recent exhibition of his. Morandi has devoted himself patiently and humbly to the art of painting still lifes, each one of which breathes its own individual atmosphere, which is also a climate of the soul. In contrast to romantic still lifes, in which it is the object that counts, the emphasis is here on composition. The timeless serenity reflected in this work can not remain inaccessible to us, even if the love it inspires in us can only be diffuse. This is painting which embodies both economy of means and vibrant humanity.