

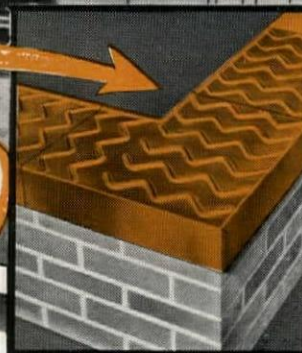
# PENCIL POINTS

JANUARY

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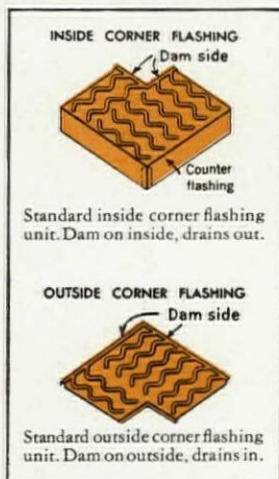


*Drains itself dry  
on a level bed!*



*Kearny High School,  
Kearny, N. J., where  
Anaconda Through-  
Wall Flashing has re-  
cently been installed.  
Architects: b-bee &  
Krahmer, Newark,  
N. J. General Contrac-  
tors: The Carlson Com-  
pany, Montclair, N. J.  
Sheet Metal Contrac-  
tors: Schtiller & Plevy,  
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*Kearny (N. J.) High School uses this scientifically designed copper flashing to obtain protection against wet walls and heaving by frost.*

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GOOD NEWS FOR ALL  
ARCHITECTS AND  
PENCIL PUSHERS!

IT IS OUR PLEASURE TO ANNOUNCE A FORTHCOMING SERIES OF LESSONS IN PENCIL DRAWING, BY THEODORE KAUTZKY, WHICH WILL APPEAR MONTHLY IN PENCIL POINTS, BEGINNING IN MARCH OR APRIL. WITH EACH LESSON THERE WILL BE A HANDSOME PLATE REPRODUCTION, EVEN BETTER THAN THE ONE SHOWN OVERLEAF, OF A FINISHED SKETCH ILLUSTRATING THE PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION AND RENDERING WHICH THE AUTHOR WILL DISCUSS AND DEMONSTRATE IN THE LESSON. NO ARCHITECT OR DRAFTSMAN WILL WANT TO MISS THIS SERIES BY A MAN WHO RANKS TODAY AMONG THE LEADING ARCHITECTURAL DELINEATORS OF THIS COUNTRY





FROM A PENCIL SKETCH BY THEODORE KAUTZKY

PENCIL POINTS



# HENRY WRIGHT

BY ALAN MATHER

In much that has been written about Henry Wright as an architect and site planner there is an emphasis upon his curiosity, his ingenuity. He, also, had a tendency to underline a quality of inquisitiveness in himself. The small boy who takes an alarm clock to pieces "to see why it goes" was the type to which he liked to compare himself. Unfortunately, some of his best friends, not realizing that an artist's statement of why he does anything is usually more of a disguise than an explanation, have accepted *curiosity* and its ramifications as being an important part of Wright's character.

Now, when you are dealing with people whose perpetual inquiries have a merely morbid character "curiosity" seems a handy word. You might use it with relation to a man who starts reading the Encyclopædia Britannica at ABACUS and keeps steadily at it until he reaches ZYGOTE. But among intelligent people in general, and in Henry Wright in particular, inquiry takes such a definite and consistent direction as would seem to benefit themselves, their profession, or their class immediately or ultimately. Hence it is the purpose of this article to avoid surface history that depicts Wright's curiosity or even that latent sympathy with homes, trees, and babies which Mr. Lewis Mumford so ably vignettted in an article in *The New Republic* some years ago. Here the concentration will be on a theme of importance to architects—Henry Wright's attempts to extend the influence of the architect into site planning, the economics of house building, and regional planning in the interests of personal and professional

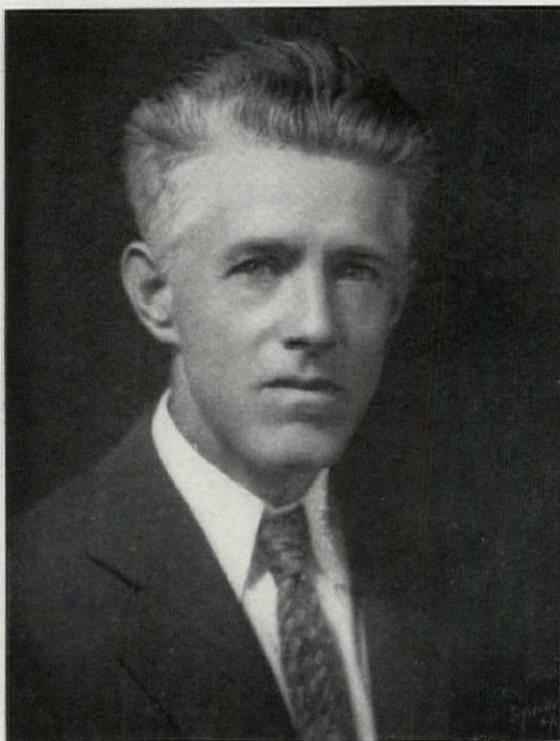
survival. Here too there will be some description of the contrary opinions that existed in the profession at the times he offered specific proposals.

If you examine maps of the larger cities of the United States you will notice, on many, areas of curvilinear streets just outside the gridiron street systems of the central and oldest portions. In nine cases out of ten, these areas were added to the cities during the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century when the well-to-do sought their Ideal in the suburban home. The vermicelli type streets, kind to land contours, represented the triumphs of the landscape architects of those days, just as their contemporaries, the half-timbered pseudo-Elizabethan mansions, represented the pride of the architects. Indeed the two were complementary. In those same days great park and parkway systems were being founded.

It was in this environment made hopeful for the landscape architect that Henry Wright found himself when, in 1902, after some experience in the offices of Root and Siemens and Van Brunt and Howe, he went to work for George E. Kessler on park developments and on the construction of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. While in St. Louis, working on the exposition, he became acquainted with many substantial citizens and got much work laying out lands for their residences in the city outskirts. When Kessler informed Wright that he would have to get out on his own if he was going to engage in real estate development work, Wright set up as a landscape architect.

As long as the immense homes of the upper





HENRY WRIGHT

WHO WAS BORN IN 1878 AND DIED IN 1936

middle class were being built on ample suburban lots, Wright was happy enough fixing grades, pushing buildings and architects all over the landscape, arranging curved drive-ways for the new-fangled motor cars, and pathways from homes to street car station shelters on block corners, etc., etc. But as time went on and economic circumstances operated to reduce the building of pseudo-Elizabethan mansions, Wright found himself engaged, by necessity, in platting lands for lower middle class housing developments. In this work, economic limitations gave no latitude to that capability in dealing with land contours, trees, and plants which Wright had acquired in working for Kessler. Naturally enough Wright rebelled against the system.

With great ingenuity, statistical thoroughness and, as some say, curiosity, he spent the rest of his life trying to prove that real estate customs were ninety percent folly and ten percent knavery. Ironically enough, it is not for his conclusive proofs in these directions that Wright deserves his fame, but rather for many discoveries made along the path toward the proof. Just as an inventor

who starts out to discover something of middling importance may stumble by accident upon something of great importance, so it was with Wright. He began by placing a firecracker under real estate subdividers and ended by providing city planning students with enough dynamite to blow the present rotten foundations of city planning practice out of the way.

In 1920 the City Planning Commission of Wright's home town, St. Louis, sought advice from him concerning economies in house design. Since 1909 residential construction there had steadily dwindled, causing a shortage of space for the housing of workers in new industries which had come there at the end of the World War. Wright's conclusions erased doubt that the speculative builder's custom of subordinating the design of the individual house to stereotyped systems of land platting was

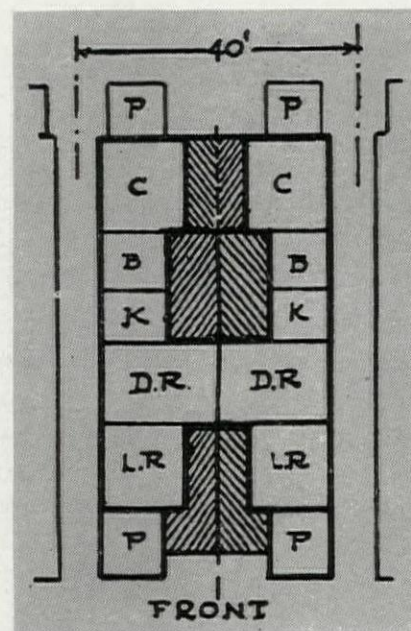
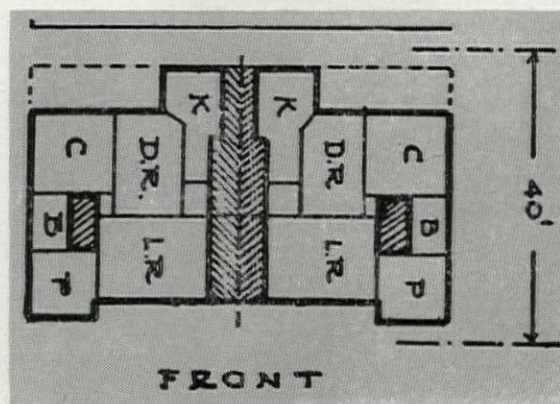


DIAGRAM 1





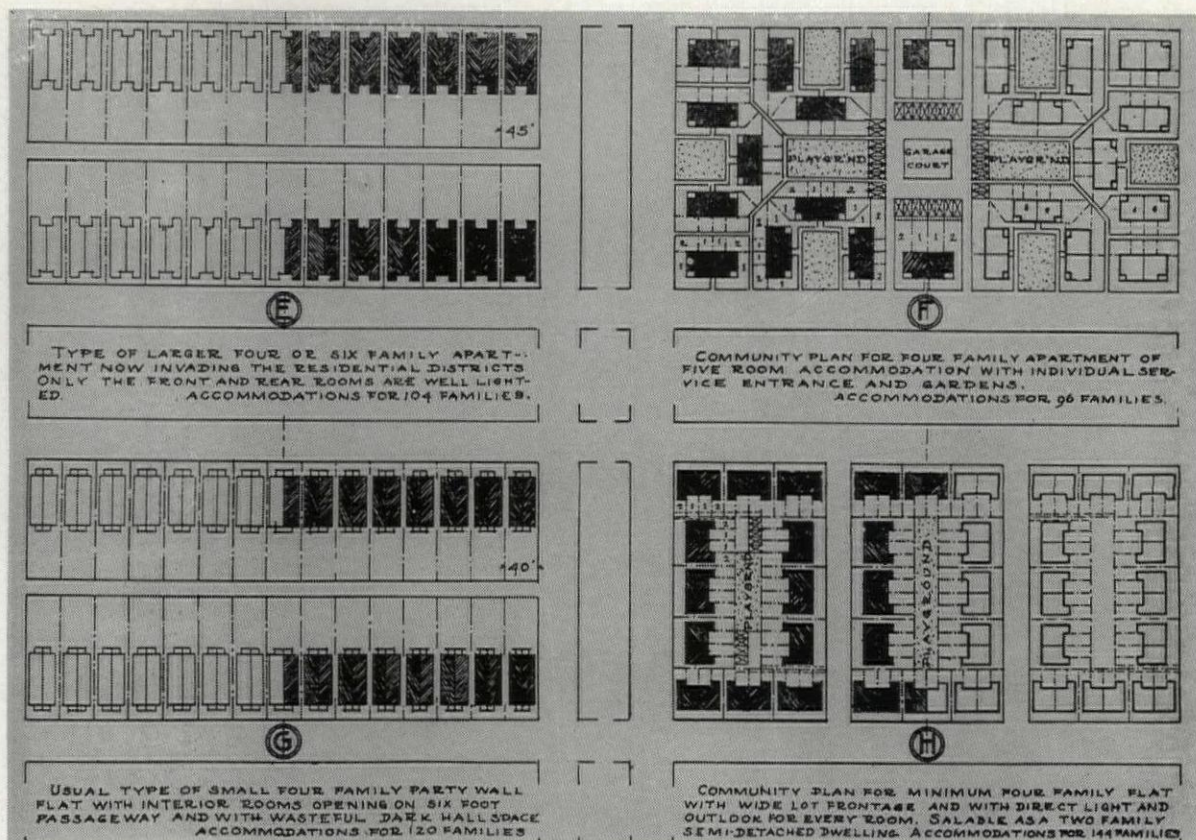


DIAGRAM 2

(ST. LOUIS)

COMMUNITY PLANNING

producing homes of a very low standard. He accepted the current substitution of four-family and six-family flats for single-family detached houses because rising finance, land, and building costs had put the detached house out of reach of the worker's family. But he criticized the habit (Diagram 1) of wedging these bulky structures into lots platted for single-family houses. All that the speculative builder had done, as Wright pointed out, was to thin down the single-family house plan, connect its rooms with a long and wasteful corridor, put two such plans together, and multiply this combination by two floors for a four-family house or by three floors for a six-family house. An offensive product of the custom of arranging these inferior houses in unbroken lines was the narrow side yard. This was damp, sunless, and noisy; and the central rooms got the doubtful privilege of opening into it. In all this could be seen the fault of subordinating good building to the convenience of the land salesman.

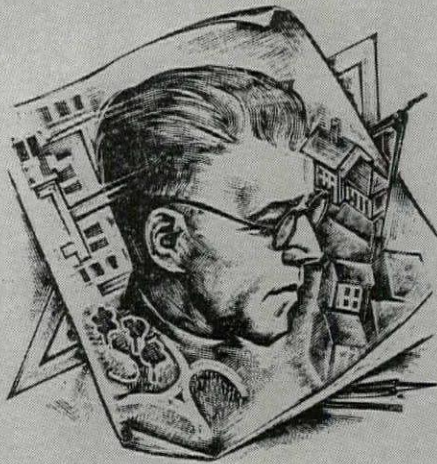
In presenting his, the architect's, alternatives to these houses built for land speculators, Wright wished to turn the length of each

house parallel to the street (Diagram 1). To do this and also allow more space between houses would eliminate the objectionable features of the side yard. However, his plan required a sixty-foot frontage for a four-family house whereas the speculators needed but forty feet (Diagram 2G). If approximately the same number of houses per block was to be maintained (and Wright felt that the existing density of occupancy was unavoidable) he would have to reduce the lot depth in proportion to its increase in width. In Diagram 2F this was effected by a radical rearrangement of houses into groups around courtyards facing exterior streets; and in Diagram 2H it was effected by dividing the single deep block with its central alley into three blocks. In these diagrams is the theme that Wright repeated many times later with variations, *viz.*, the necessity for changing the system of land platting to suit new building types, of changing block sizes, and of eliminating the gridiron street system.

During the World War, high rents resulting from a cumulative housing shortage had a tendency to eat into the relatively high



## HENRY WRIGHT MEMORIAL LIBRARY



1878-1936

AVERY LIBRARY  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

THE BOOKPLATE MARKING VOLUMES OF THE HENRY WRIGHT MEMORIAL LIBRARY, PRESENTED TO THE AVERY ARCHITECTURAL LIBRARY OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY BY THE HOUSING STUDY GUILD, IS FROM A WOOD ENGRAVING BY HANS ALEXANDER MULLER

wages being paid to labor in the war industries. There was much dissatisfaction and a heavy labor turnover. Also, new war supply factories were built in places remote from large cities, because of the danger in the material handled or for strategic reasons, and whole new residential communities had to go up as the mills were built. Faced with these conditions the government had been compelled to go into the housing business and it brought architects into the work that in peacetime was left to real estate speculators and speculative builders.

As a result an extraordinary housing and town planning consciousness was awakened among members of the American Institute of Architects—a consciousness that was reflected in its *Journal* during the War and for some years afterward. In this magazine Wright generalized his findings for the St. Louis City Plan Commission to fit the na-

tional conditions in housing. Its pages were improved with the site plans of the City of the Future drawn by Institute members gone entirely berserk. Here Frederick Lee Ackerman, throwing professional caution to the winds, adapted the theories of Thorstein Veblen to architecture and asked Veblenite questions about the economic basis of Zoning and the building industry investigation in New York City.

Articles on architectural education rubbed elbows with essays on cathedrals in Spain and thoughts on the inevitability of draftsmen's organizations jostled letters from irate Elder Statesmen of Architecture protesting that, after all, beauty was the thing. Never before in the history of architecture in these United States had there been such a cosmopolitan and thoroughly alive technical journal.

As chairman of the Committee on Community Planning, of the Institute, Wright urged his fellow Institute members to take note of the national trend to multi-family housing. During the war days, with the Emergency Fleet Corporation planning new communities for shipbuilding workers, he had seen how rental charges necessary to cover land costs per house had ranged from highest in single family houses to lowest for six-family apartment buildings. This example, since it was not affected by good planning in one category and bad in another but by an equal quality of planning in all, and also since it was not influenced by the profit motive, offered conclusive proof that multi-family housing was the most practicable for the lower-income groups.

But between 1920 and 1926, when Wright advised that architects get some of this kind of work, there was a return to "normalcy." For all but a few like Wright, with whom the memory of wartime communities such as Yorkship Village remained, the normal thing was to hand all economic analysis and land platting back to the financier and the realtor. In residential work of low cost this meant confining oneself to simple draftsmanship on a single building type to be indefinitely repeated in construction over miles of gridiron street. But for most archi-



tests the truly normal life began when they did high cost Italianate houses. By 1926 even Frederick Ackerman was writing æsthetic articles in the *Journal of the A.I.A.* There, cathedrals in Spain and Italian well-heads had so pressed down upon the housing and town-planning people that in 1926, Henry Wright, reporting for the Committee on Community Planning wrote rather apologetically, "It may be in order to dispel the suspicion that the Committee is embarking upon a crusade of reformation or hopes to offer a constructive 'solution' of the problem."

Having been assured that the housing Bolsheviks had parked their bombs and red flags at the coat room, the elder club members went back to sleep again. Year after year, as the memory of the war housing agencies receded, the *Journal of the A.I.A.* became steadily more archæological, more purely æsthetic, more remote. Finally, in 1928, having withdrawn all the way into its shell, it expired.

The direction taken by Wright in his own work was toward the large-scale project efficiently platted, financed, and built. By 1920 he had seen that the speculative builder's curtailment of space in the individual house to meet the buying power of the average citizen had reached the point of diminishing returns. From that time economies toward buying power had to be in matters of more intelligent land use, group housing, reduction of street costs per house, changes in the gridiron street plan, large scale construction and finance. He had an opportunity to experiment on a large scale with these theories, in the development of "Sunnyside" in Long Island City, for a limited dividend corporation, City Housing Corporation, of which Alexander M. Bing was president. He collaborated in this with Clarence S. Stein and Ackerman. Diagram 3 illustrates the theoretical effect on the cost of the house to the ultimate user, with 6% interest as contrasted to the usual speculative return. The graphic presentation, typical of Wright's diagrams, is taken from the *Federationist* of the American Federation of Labor. It shows: (A) Distribution of "build-

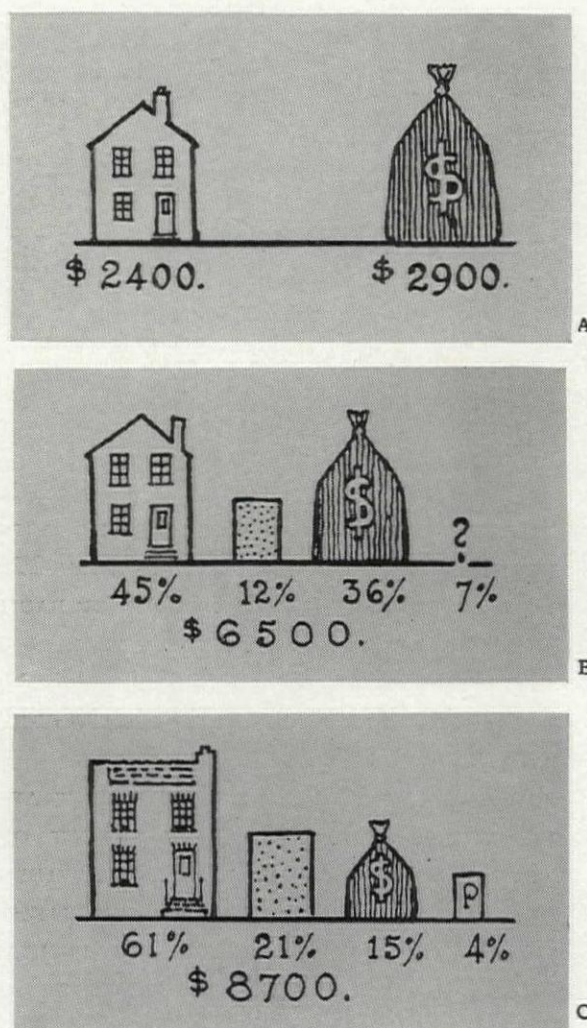


DIAGRAM 3  
DISTRIBUTION OF COSTS

ing costs" (left) and "other costs" (right) in a speculative house selling at \$5300. The \$2400 is an outside figure for all costs of construction, including fixtures usually sold with such a house. (B) Distribution of costs in a speculative six-room, frame house; (left to right) building cost, land (not more than 5%) and outside improvements, financing and selling, and unfinished public improvements. (C) Distribution of costs in a Sunnyside six-room brick house; (left to right) building cost, land (about 15%) and outside improvements, financing and selling, and community improvements.

But, despite all the economies of Sunnyside, the cost of the new house remained out of reach of the working man. Steadily mounting land costs and other factors, the causes of which were noted in a report by Stein and Wright in 1926, made home ownership difficult to obtain in safety.



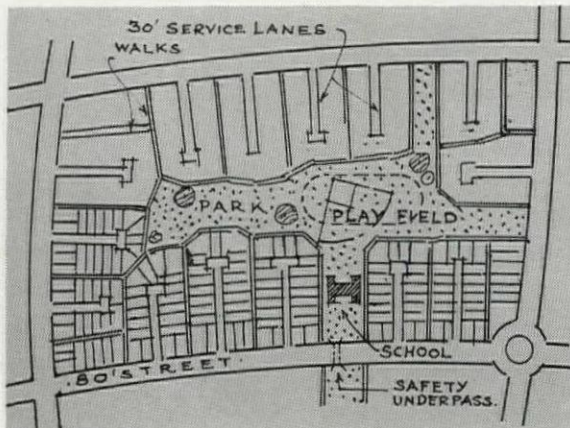
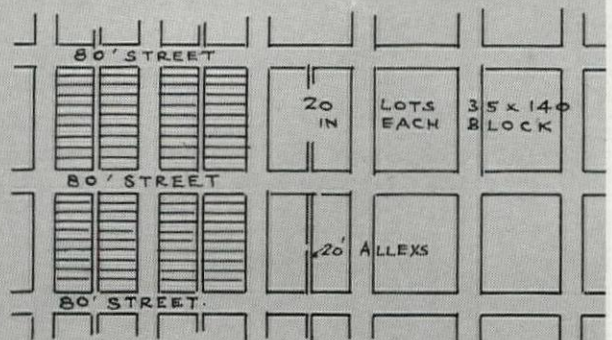


DIAGRAM 4



FUNCTIONAL BLOCK PLANNING

"SUPER BLOCK" (40 ACRES) IN THE PLANNED TOWN OF RADBURN, N. J., HAS 275 LOTS EQUIVALENT TO 35 X 100 FEET EACH AND 6 ACRES OF PARK AND SCHOOL SITE

10 BLOCKS OF 37 ACRES INCLUDING STREETS IN UNPLANNED WYANDOTTE, MICH., CONTAINING 200 LOTS 35 X 140 FEET WITH ALLEYS. NO PARK OR SCHOOL SITE PLANNED

## COMPARATIVE STREET LENGTHS AND AREAS FOR THE TWO TOWNS

RADBURN HAS 2800 LINEAR FEET OF TRAFFIC STREETS AND 3500 LINEAR FEET OF "LANES" WITH AN AREA OF 21.1%. THERE ARE 4 TRAFFIC INTERSECTIONS PER MILE. SIDE STREET (WASTE) FRONTAGE IS LESS THAN 20% OF UTILIZED FRONTAGE STREETS

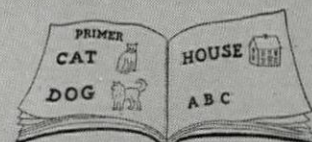
WYANDOTTE HAS 7300 LINEAR FEET OF TRAFFIC STREETS AND 3500 LINEAR FEET OF ALLEYS WITH AN AREA OF 40%. THERE ARE 13 TRAFFIC INTERSECTIONS PER MILE. SIDE STREET (WASTE) FRONTAGE IS MORE THAN 100% OF UTILIZED FRONTAGE STREETS

So long as Wright was confined to mere modifications of the gridiron system, his methods of reducing the per house cost of streets were not very impressive. As a measure of economy he proposed that blocks be made longer. For example, with reference to the accompanying diagram of Wyandotte (Diagram 4) this would have meant eliminating the middle 80-foot street in the original plan of the city. Since the cost of that street was reflected in the cost of land development, its elimination might have brought a proportionate decrease in the cost of each lot. But such a solution was a make-shift because, while it might effect certain economies, it left many other problems unsettled.

In the plan of Radburn it would seem that the fact was squarely faced that the gridiron system was not so much a plan as a symbol of land sale practices. Here the tradition of combining the triple functions of pathway, through traffic, and local traffic roads in one

## A PRIMER OF HOUSING WHY?

*Before you learned the A-B-C's you knew one thing only about Reading*



**IT LOOKED HARD!**

**Most people**

**know one thing only about Housing:**  
**"THEY HATE TO PAY RENT."**

**Why not study the A-B-C's, then you may be able to DO something about housing.**



When they face the problem of buying their own home, most people find out that they cannot get what they want for the price they want to pay. But they don't know why! Many different things help to make the price high. It's well to study these things because they affect the prices that we all have to pay for rent.

DIAGRAM 5

HOUSING PRIMER



groove was questioned. Here, too, the historical fact that our city blocks have been planned to suit horse carriages, outhouses in the rear yard, and farmhouse porches on each house front, was recognized. The higher relative speed of the automobile was duly noted and, logically enough, the distance between traffic street intersections and, *ergo*, block size was increased. The front porch and the outhouse being gone with the wind, opportunities were afforded to put the front where the back used to be.

The simple process of analyzing and then splitting the several functions of the street led to all the economies gained by merely fiddling around with the gridiron system. The moral to be drawn here is plain. The scientific or functional method used in planning Radburn is much more important than Radburn itself. Before this job, Wright had tried, as can be seen in the St. Louis City Plan Commission proposals, to outsmart the real estate men at their own game using *their* loaded dice. But the Radburn plan signified a breaking away from the established customs of subdivision and sale and

a movement toward a strictly functional and architectural analysis of the city planning problem. The plan is obviously the work of an architect with real estate and landscape training. Having learned the ins and outs of the game, Wright had simply substituted his architectural dice for those used by the real estate fraternity.

The need for educating the public concerning the nature and value of the services of the architect has been the subject of much discussion in institutes and unions. Henry Wright and some of his associates succeeded in putting this idea into practice, while organizations bogged down in talk, for the simple reason that Wright was willing to meet half-way those groups having a restricted but useful interest in architecture. We look through his writings and drawings in real estate, social work, and labor magazines, and in each case find an approach to the subject under discussion carefully directed to answer the kind of questions that the reader is likely to ask. The accompanying frontispiece (Diagram 5) from "A Primer of Housing," a pamphlet by A. C.

## SLUM CONDITIONS HOW DID THEY GROW?

### 4<sup>th</sup> STAGE EXPANSION

#### STEPS:

17. It cost more to build new law buildings.
18. Therefore it was necessary to put them ON THE CHEAPEST LAND obtainable.
19. Money had to be spent to improve transportation, lay out streets, sewers, and water and gas supplies.
20. The improvements raised the cost of new land and increased the taxes on old land.
21. People preferred the new law houses up town VACANCIES began to increase in the old law buildings.
22. In the new districts vacant lots supplied air spaces and playground.



Those who first go to live in new districts have to put up with inconveniences such as fewer theatres and markets, and longer travel and unpaved streets, but they get the newest type of houses and sometimes cheaper rents, and usually plenty of light and air because of the great number of vacant lots.

## SLUM CONDITIONS HOW DID THEY GROW?

### 5<sup>th</sup> STAGE AFTER THE WAR

#### STEPS:

23. BY DECREASING THE VALUE OF MONEY THE WAR INCREASED THE COST OF LABOR AND MATERIALS AS WELL AS THE COST OF THE USE OF MONEY.
24. SINCE MINIMUM STANDARDS WERE FIXED BY LAW, RENTS HAD TO BE HIGH IN TENEMENTS BUILT AFTER THE WAR.
25. THE SHORTAGE FORCED ALL RENTS UP UNTIL RENT LEGISLATION CHECKED THE MOVE.
26. PEOPLE OF LOW INCOMES WERE FORCED TO GO BACK TO THE OLDEST HOUSES.
27. LAND STARTED OUT ON A GENERAL INCREASE IN VALUE.

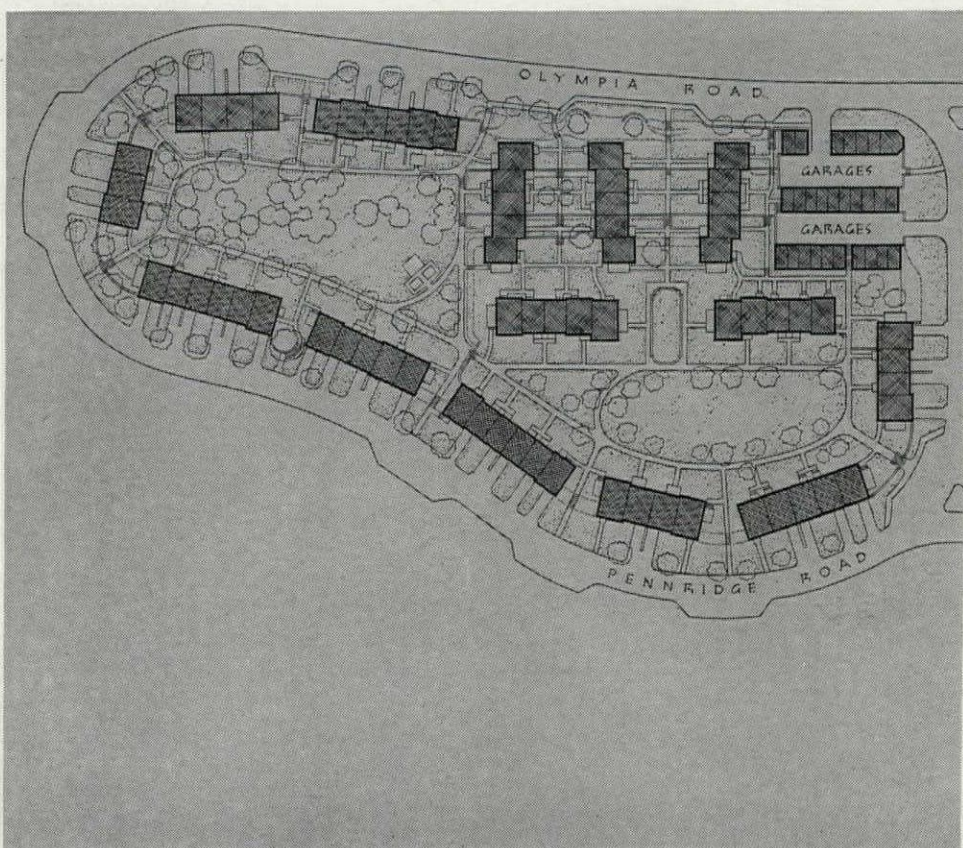


The war had a disastrous effect upon housing. Prices rose. Tenement houses couldn't be built at all except for people who could afford to pay \$16.00 to \$18.00 a room and up. Around the large cities there was a rush for the suburbs where restrictions were less and where small frame houses could be put up on very cheap land. Just as soon as people began to buy this land, however, its price began to go up.

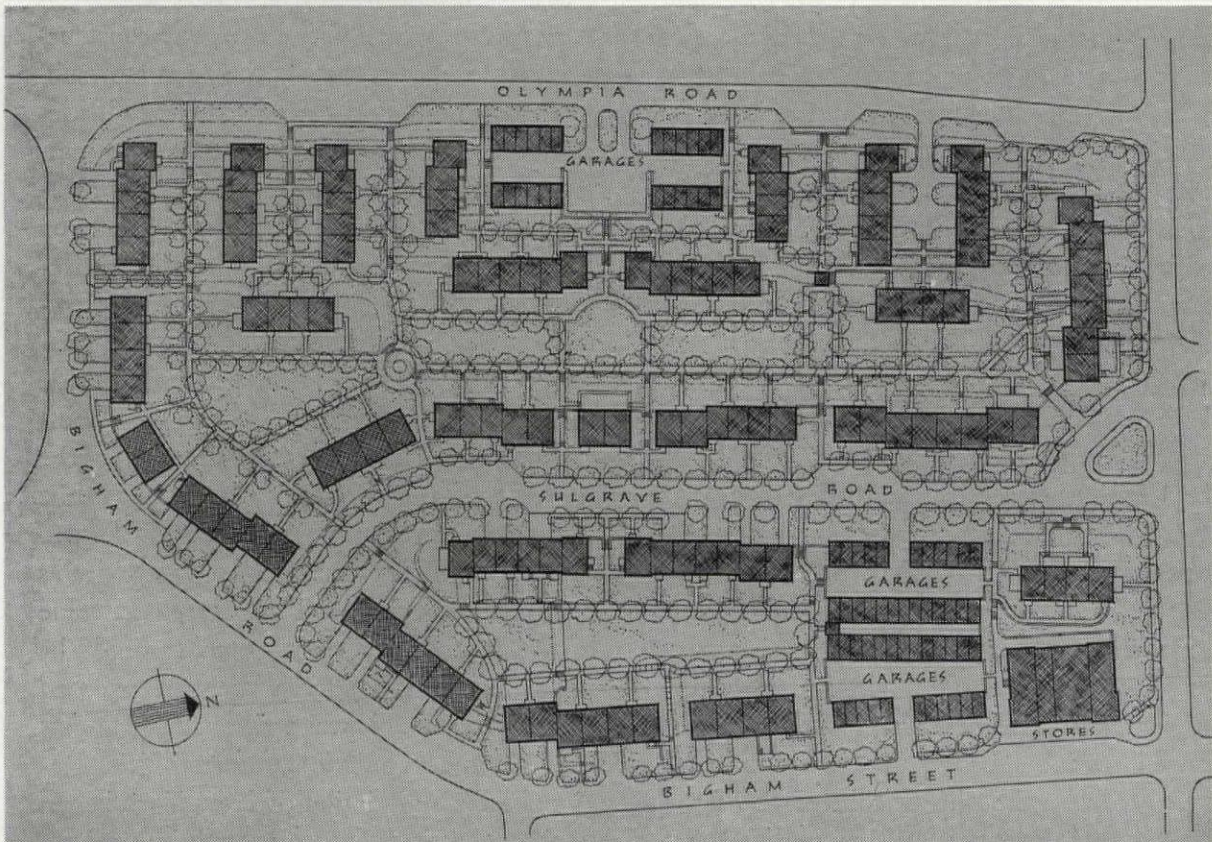
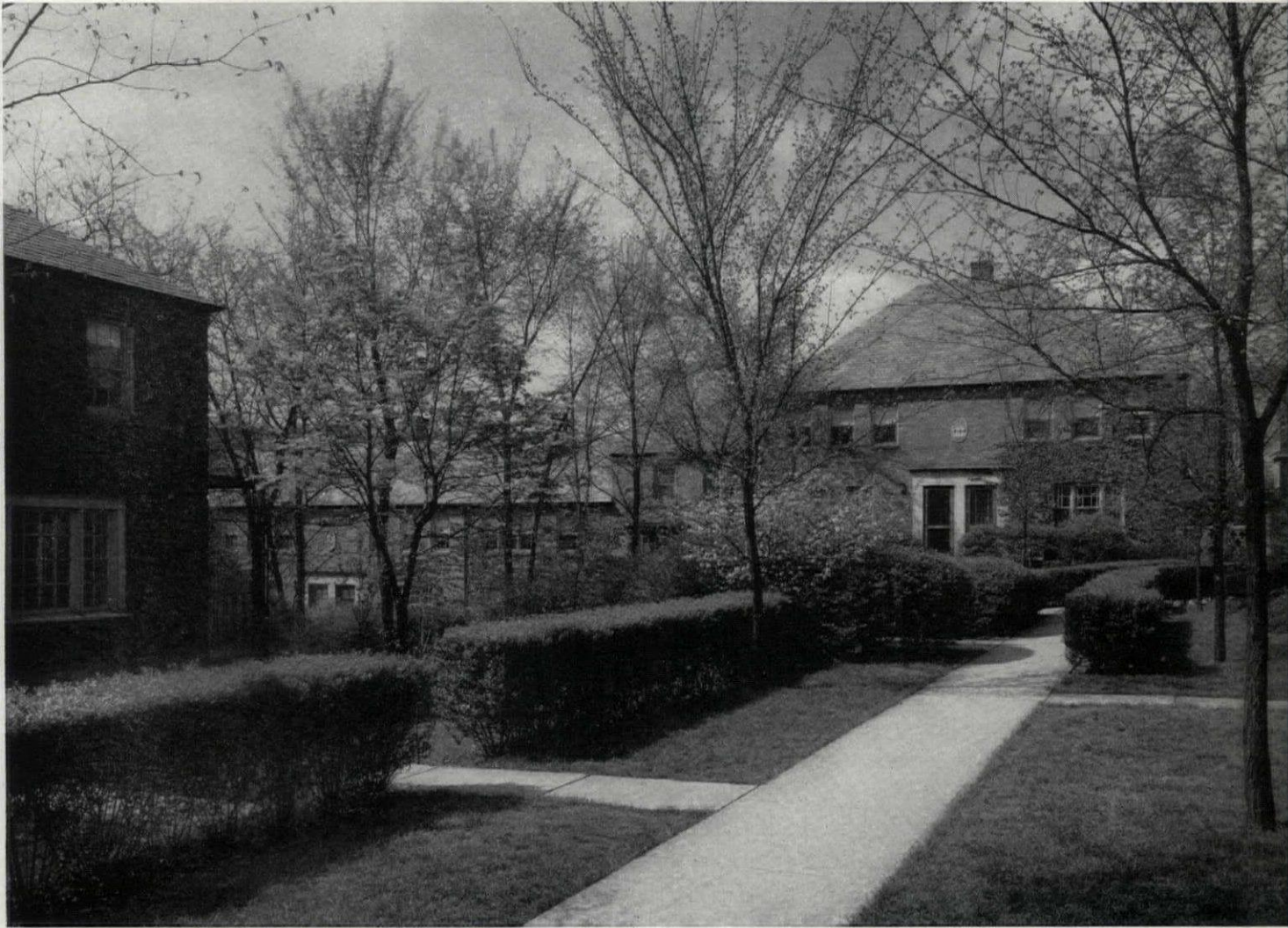




THE VARIATION OF ROOFS AND IMAGINATIVE PLANNING ON A HILLSIDE SITE ARE DISTINCTIVE OF CHATHAM VILLAGE IN PITTSBURGH, DESIGNED FOR THE BUHL FOUNDATION BY INGHAM & BOYD WITH WRIGHT AND STEIN AS CONSULTANTS ON SITE PLAN, HOUSE DESIGN, AND DEVELOPMENT COSTS. PHOTOGRAPHS AT TOP BY LINK









Holden, assisted by Stein and Henry Wright, illustrates this approach. Here *rent* is the common denominator in the housing problem, for tenant or home builder, and the matter of the pamphlet therefore revolves around the question of reducing the rent or the purchase price of a house.

The amusing thing about the little sketches used by Wright both in this pamphlet and in his articles is that they don't always look like the work of an architect. Perhaps that is because they were made with the idea of informing rather than dazzling. They lack that virtuosity of the old pen and pencil maestro striving to show how nearly he can come to making a photograph without using a camera. The style of Wright's drawing fitted his manner of writing like a glove: he was out to show comparisons in the economics of housing and nothing more. While, for example, the æsthetic advantages of group housing, properly designed, over bungalows crowded in mean rows on grid-iron streets might have been illustrated with tremendous advantage to his argument, he never used the æsthetic approach to such a question. This suggests that, as a true son of Missouri, he knew that the folks had to be shown. There was no use trying to put the weight of pretty pictures on the scales of argument in order to turn the balance in his favor. The folks back in St. Louis would see through that.

One of the most remarkable studies prepared for any governmental agency in the United States is the 1926 Report of the Commission of Housing and Regional Planning of New York State, under the chairmanship of Clarence Stein, Architect. This contains a series of diagrams drawn by Henry Wright illustrating the State's history with a simplicity and lucidity that would be hard to surpass. For the broad historical approach in this, Mr. Stein is mainly responsible. But some of the conclusions are the inevitable result of Wright's analyses. Both Wright and Stein had regarded the limited dividend housing corporation as a machine for effecting the necessary economies to bring housing within reach of the lower income groups; but they realized that

other factors related to congestion, while they remained out of control, would make it difficult to continue to provide housing of the relatively high Sunnyside standard for those groups. The report reads ominously.

"The ever-increasing concentration of population in cities and towns and the continuous depopulation of the countryside have given rise to problems in both city and country in which the State as a whole has a vital interest. The onward march to the city has resulted in rising urban land costs, a consequent intensification of land use which, in turn further increases land costs and requires still more intensive use of the land. This unending cycle has already over-burdened public facilities so that every growing city must finance new public improvements in a measure far beyond its ability, with a resulting break-down in street traffic and transit facilities, in public school equipment, and all other public services. Attempts to relieve street congestion by widening streets and resort to mechanical devices serve only to exhaust the city's tax revenue and increase congestion still further. The staggering cost of needed rapid transit facilities is met by sacrificing schools, parks, and playgrounds and even this offers no relief. The experience of New York City in subway construction demonstrates that by the time new subways are completed they are already inadequate. They also serve only to develop new sources of congestion at the center."

While that statement of conditions errs on the side of excessive dolefulness, the Regional Plan Association of New York, viewing the same matters in ten volumes published two years later, strayed on the side of extreme complacency. In fact, it almost seems as if the gloom was aggravated by the thought of the blissful way in which the Regional Survey's engineers were going to accept everything terrible about our cities as being quite inevitable. The nature and value of the Stein and Wright report can only be understood in its contrasts with the accepted ideas in the time it was written.

In 1923 the population experts of the Regional Plan Association of New York began to chart the city's future growth by project-



THE SKILL OF HENRY WRIGHT IN PLANNING FOR A DIFFICULT SITE IMPRESSED THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH HIM EVEN IN A CASUAL WAY. DR. CHARLES F. LEWIS, DIRECTOR OF THE BUHL FOUNDATION FOR WHICH CHATHAM VILLAGE (RIGHT) WAS DESIGNED AND BUILT, RECALLS OF WRIGHT THAT HE WAS "MORE THAN THE PLANNER, MORE THAN A SKILLFUL TECHNICIAN: HE WAS A MAN OF RARE VISION AND CONSCIENCE . . . A THOROUGH IDEALIST BUT AN AMAZINGLY PRACTICAL ONE . . . WE NEVER CEASED TO MARVEL AT HIS FEELING FOR TOPOGRAPHY. HIS HANDS AT TIMES SEEMED TO MOVE OVER THE DRAWING BOARD AS THOUGH HE WERE A SCULPTOR MODELING FORMS IN CLAY"

ing all the lines of past population concentration into the future. Taking 1965 as the ultimate for which they could plan, the Association's traffic engineers took these concentration estimates and drew plans to show traffic flow in the metropolitan area. One plan showed something that looked like an underfed octopus—that was traffic flow as of 1920. Another showed a gorged octopus—that was traffic flow in 1965. Other engineers began to draw projects that would make metropolitan New York, with its population doubled to 21,000,000 in 1965, fit to exist in.

Filled with the confidence born of the realization that they would be dead by the year toward which they planned, these engineers projected fantasies of double-decked streets, super-colossal sewage disposal and water supply systems, more and worse subways. All this, it must be realized, was based on a certain conception of how the city was "evolving." The population experts, using what they called statistical engineering methods, agreed that there would be a retardation of the growth of New York. The smooth, charted curve of this retardation would be similar but opposite to that of the curve of its growth as observed in the past, said they. For all their efforts to keep it within reason this *cyma recta* curve sprang stubbornly to 21,000,000 people in 1965.

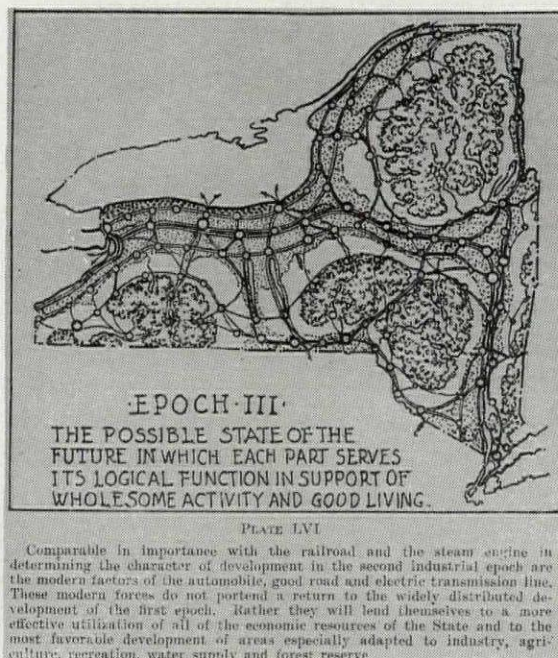
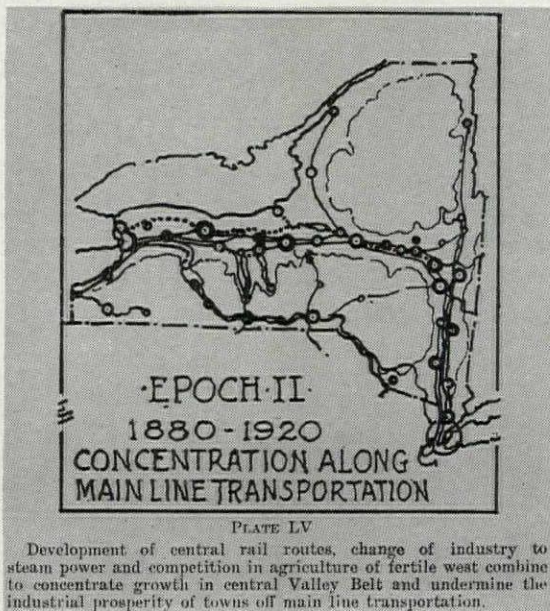
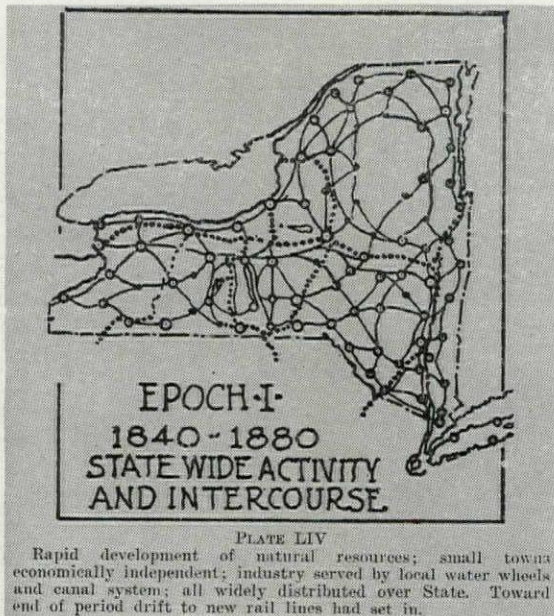


*Aerial Surveys of Pittsburgh, Inc.*

So great has been the effort expended by the statistical engineers in charting the horrors of the future and in designing projects to make them tolerable, that the advice of Clarence Stein and Henry Wright that the people of the State of New York use planning intelligence to avoid these horrors altogether might seem somewhat captious. But the fault in all this expenditure of energy was clearly indicated by Wright when he said with reference to statistical engineering, "The more perfectly any given series of evolutionary facts are recorded the greater the temptation to give them weight as indication of the inevitable trends. *Planning tends to become involved in predication rather than direction.*"

This way of thinking, of asking the substitution of positive choice in place of passive acceptance of custom that nobody really enjoys; this emphasis on design, as distinct from mere fabrication with standardized parts, which should distinguish the architect at his best from the engineer at his worst, was increased in Henry Wright as he grew older. In 1931, having made a trip through eight typical American cities in North, Central and Midwest States to study the trends and activity of house building he came back with the question "Is the public getting what it wants, or is it being made to think that it wants what it is getting?"





At that time the press was pounding along on a single track, saying with a monotonous rhythm that the cure for the faults of standardization is more standardization; for the faults of mechanization, more mechanization, prefabrication, integration, rationalization . . . When one considers that the contractor-builders were building miles of bungalows or multi-family houses in 1931 with all the defects that Wright had criticized in 1920 one realizes how little all the talk of standardization actually settled. Speaking of the prospect of the machine-made house of the future as some saw it, and of this with relation to the work of the contractor-builders that he had just seen in his trip, Wright said:

"The defects of these houses are not primarily bad quality, excessively bad taste, or even unreasonable cost. The outstanding defect is one which, alas, will probably continue to be repeated whether our houses are erected brick by brick to imitate mediæval castles or are electro-welded to look like escaped sections of the county jail: namely, our total and utter lack of appreciation of the fact that the quality of the house plan is definitely and irrevocably related to its site and setting.

"At the present writing there is too little encouragement to believe that the machine-made house will alter the situation in this respect. Our unimaginativeness is too deep-rooted. Related planning has escaped our consciousness alike as planners, builders and owners. Failing to recognize the individual dwelling as an integral part of a well-ordered community so arranged that rooms may be related to sunlight or prevailing breezes, we naturally fall back upon such gadgets as 'conditioned air' and artificial sun rays to make up the deficiencies of the repetitive narrow lot plan. In short, the problem becomes removed from the province of planning to that of the inventor."

CLARENCE S. STEIN, IN THE 1926 REPORT OF THE "COMMISSION OF HOUSING AND REGIONAL PLANNING" PREPARED WITH MR. WRIGHT AS PLANNING ADVISER, ENVISIONED A FUTURE NEW YORK STATE, AS AT LEFT





PENCIL STUDY OF TREES AND ARCHITECTURE BY DAVID DAVIS





PENCIL STUDY BY DAVID DAVIS—TREES AND ARCHITECTURE





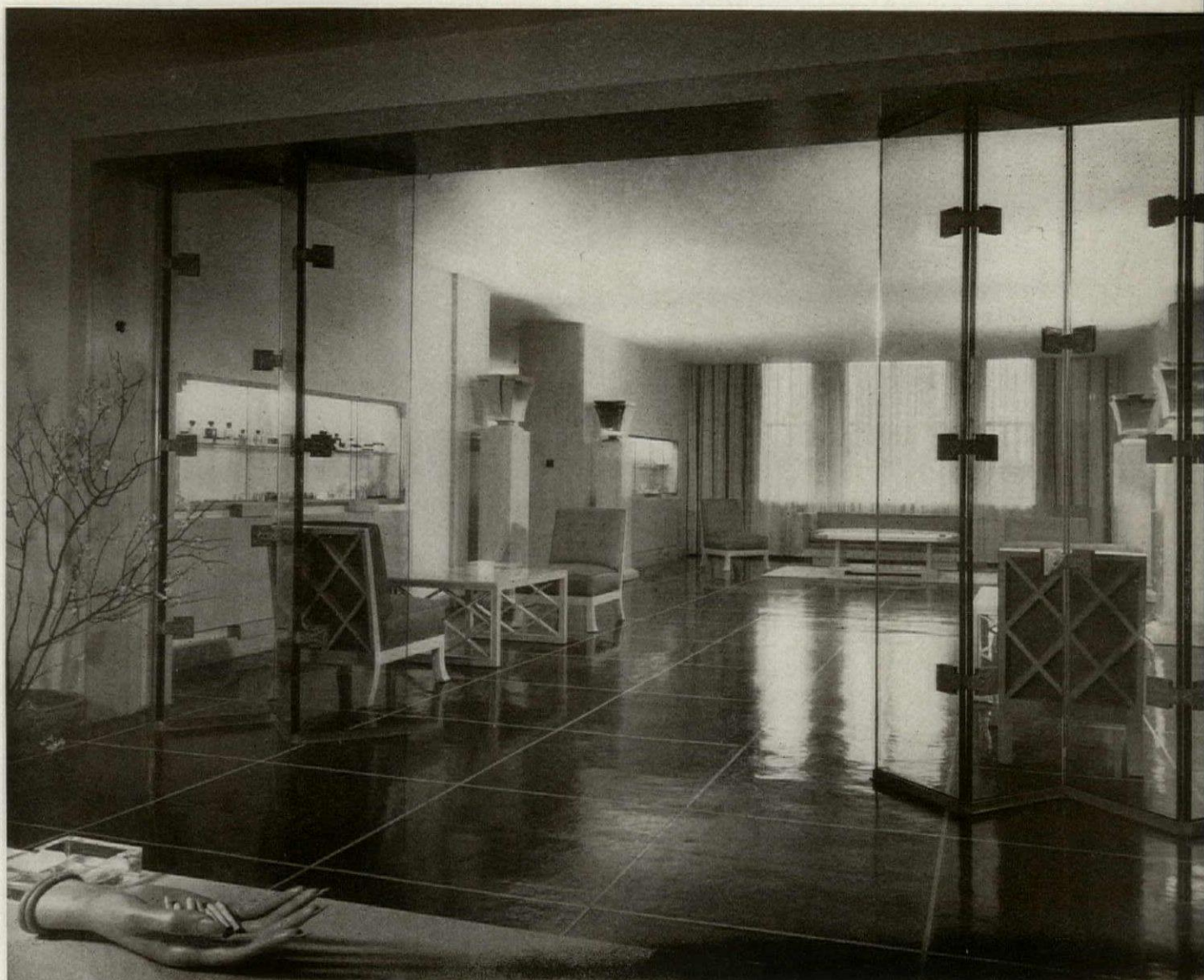
SHOWROOMS OF *ANTOINE DE PARIS* DESIGNED BY DARVEED, INC.



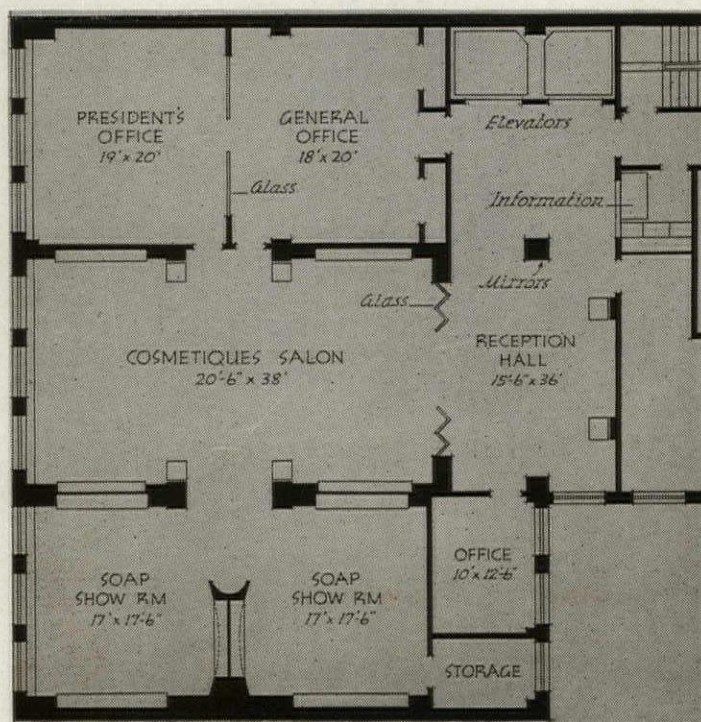


MODERN MATERIALS ARE COMBINED EFFECTIVELY IN THE FIFTH AVENUE SHOWROOMS OF ANTOINE DE PARIS, DESIGNED AND EXECUTED BY T. H. ROBSJOHN-GIBBINGS, INTERIOR DESIGNER, AND RENE C. BRUGNONI, ARCHITECT, ASSOCIATED WITH DARVEED, INC., OF NEW YORK. LIGHT BIRCH, GLASS, BRONZE, AND POLISHED RUBBER TILE LEND UNUSUAL CHARACTER, AS THESE VIEWS OF THE RECEPTION ROOM SHOW

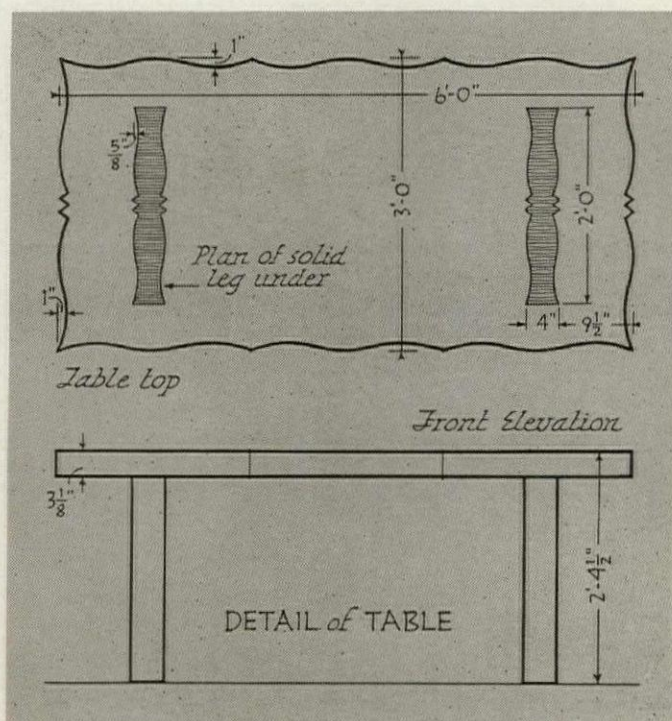




WALLS OF WARM BEIGE AND THE LUSTROUS BLACK FLOOR PROVIDE A RICH BACKGROUND FOR BLEACHED AND WAXED BIRCH FURNITURE, WITH SOFT, WARM, ORANGE UPHOLSTERY, AND FOR THE HANDSOME GLASS AND BRONZE SCREEN, ABOVE, BETWEEN THE RECEPTION ROOM AND PRINCIPAL SHOWROOM. DOORS ARE COVERED WITH PIGSKIN. PHOTOS OF THE SHOWROOMS WERE MADE BY RICHARD GARRISON, NEW YORK





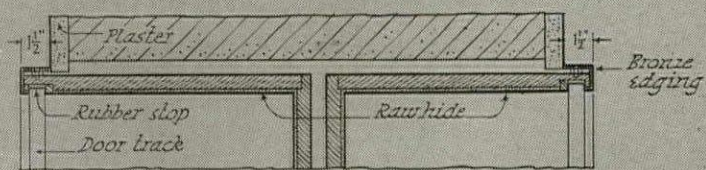


THIS VIEW INTO ONE OF THE SPECIALTY SHOWROOMS IS FROM THE SMALL FOYER OFF THE PRINCIPAL SALON. THE WINDOW DRAPERIES OF SPECIALLY-WOVEN SATIN MATCH THE BEIGE WALLS AND HAVE APPLIQUED LEAF DESIGNS OF BLACK AND ORANGE FELT. THE GLASS CURTAINS ARE OF WHITE GAUZE. THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, ACROSS-PAGE, IS SEPARATED FROM THE GENERAL OFFICE BY A THICK GLASS SCREEN WITH DOOR OF HERCULITE. THE WALLS ARE WARM GRAY AND THE FLOOR OF MARBLEIZED GRAY RUBBER TILE, IN LARGE BLOCKS. THE FURNITURE IS BLEACHED OAK. DRAPERIES ARE STRIPED LINEN

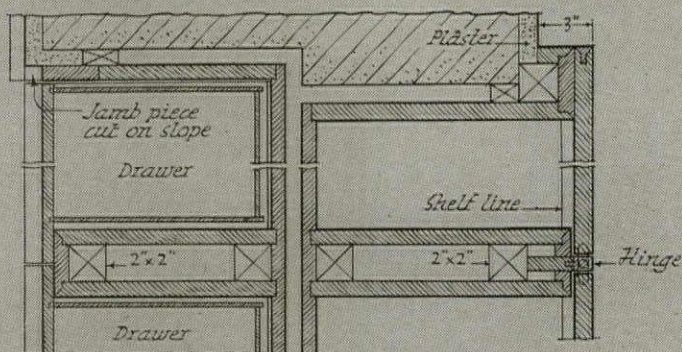




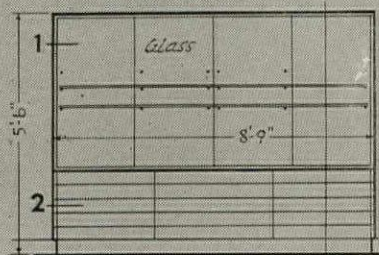




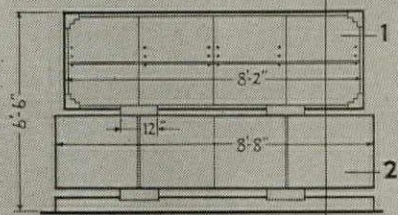
SECTION 1



SECTION 2

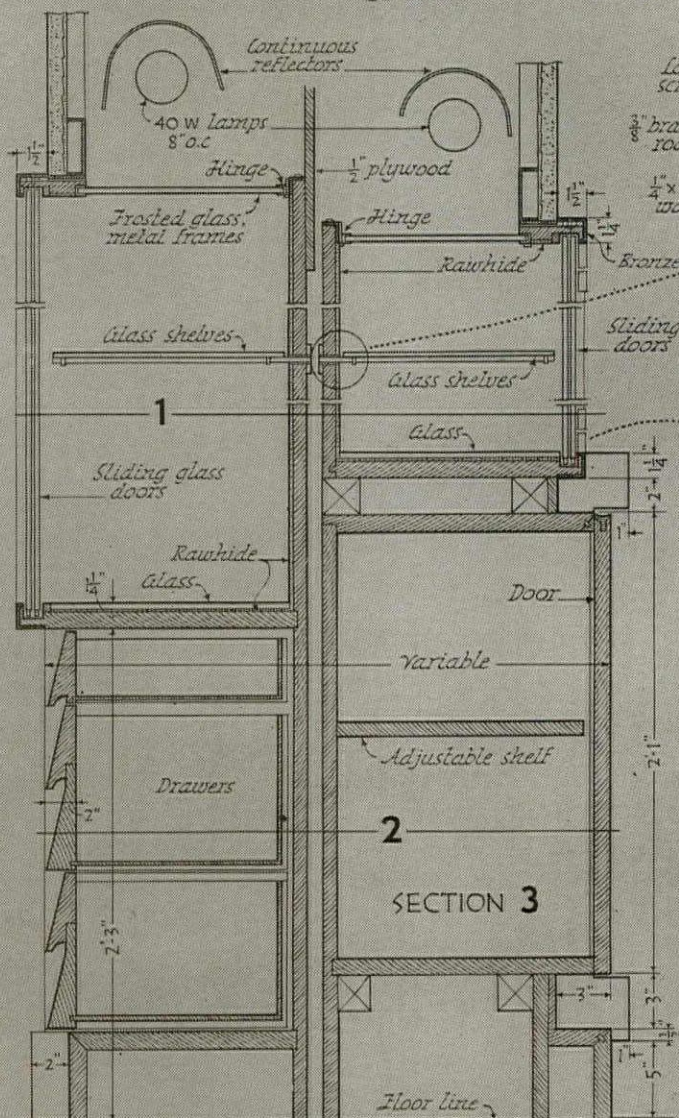


REAR ELEVATION

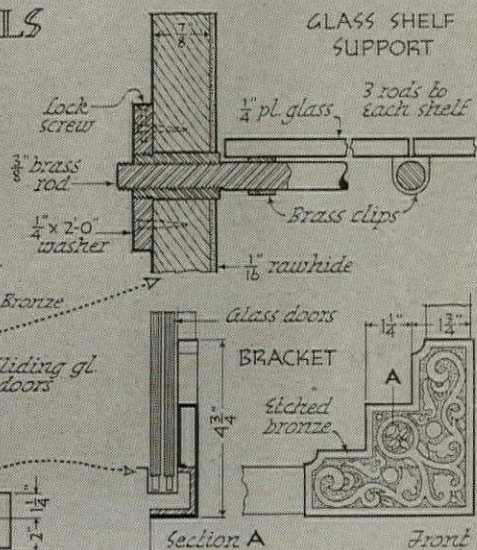


FRONT ELEVATION

## CASE DETAILS

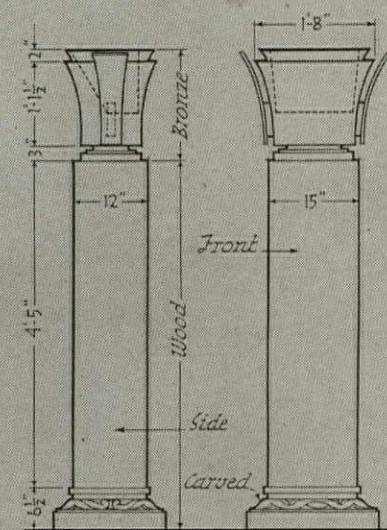


SECTION 3



Section A

Front



LIGHTING STANDARD





T. H. ROBSJOHN-GIBBINGS, DESIGNER, RENE C. BRUGNONI, ARCHITECT





THIS VIEW INTO THE SMALL FOYER OFF THE PRINCIPAL SHOWROOM OF *ANTOINE DE PARIS* GIVES A GLIMPSE OF THE TWO SMALLER SHOWROOMS, WHERE FINE SOAPS AND OTHER COSMETIC SPECIALTIES ARE DISPLAYED. A PART OF THE SHOWCASES, WHICH ARE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE IN THE LARGER ROOM (SEE DETAILS ON PAGE 22) MAY BE SEEN WITHIN THE ROOMS ON THE FAR WALL. THE BLEACHED BIRCH FURNITURE INCLUDES THE CHAIRS SHOWN, WITH INTERLACED PIGSKIN SEATS, AND ALSO CHAIRS UPHOLSTERED IN QUILTED SILK. THE INDO-CHINESE STATUETTE ON THE PEDESTAL IS DRAMATICALLY LIGHTED BY A SMALL CEILING SPOTLIGHT AT THE LEFT, LOCATED JUST WITHIN THE OPENING INTO THE LITTLE FOYER



# NEWER SIGHTS OF NEW YORK

BY TALBOT HAMLIN

Fortunately, not even Manhattan Island has entirely sidestepped the results of the revival in building which has gradually been gathering speed during the last two years. Much of the work has, of course, been purely routine in design, but it is an encouraging fact to note that several speculative apartment house projects which have recently been completed show definite architectural distinction of one kind or another. In some ways, the largest of those projects recently opened is the most interesting—Castle Village, designed by George Fred Pelham, Jr. It is exciting not because of the details of its design, but because it is the most forward-looking experiment in new ways of land usage. Its site is superb—a long stretch of property north of 181st Street between Cabrini Boulevard (once Northern Avenue) and Riverside Drive, formerly the site of the gardens and the old stone castle, designed by A. J. Davis some eighty years ago, which had been the Paterno home.

It is interesting to speculate on what an unimaginative architect would have done with this site—how he would have lined up his buildings along the street front and, in the effort to obtain the last possible foot of rentable area with cheap construction, built six-story apartments which would have both wrecked the entire beauty of the site itself and added just one more banal block to the not too inspiring wastes of Washington Heights. Castle Village does not do this; instead, five cross-shaped towers, twelve stories high, were erected, set fairly close to

the street—which fortunately bends in the middle of the site, so that the row is not a straight one—and so designed that not only is there clear view and ventilation between them, but also the wide, pleasant areas of the old garden along the bluff on the west are preserved to a remarkable degree. The architect even kept the old pergola which, stretching along the brink of the cliff, had for so many years been a landmark to those approaching the city by Riverside Drive or across the George Washington Bridge.

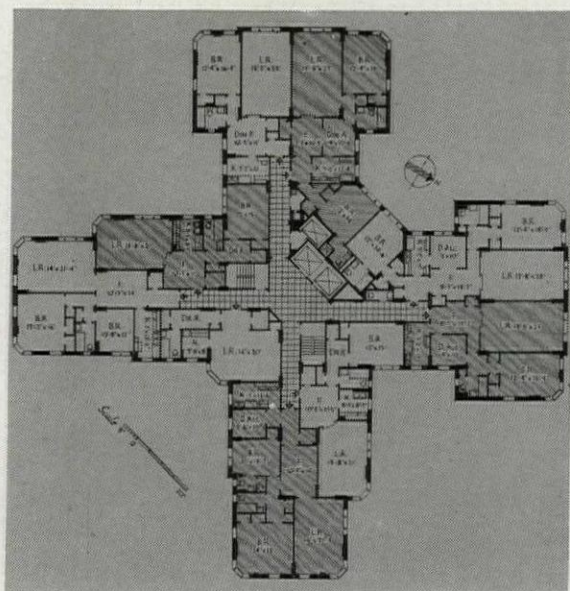
The result is as aesthetically attractive as it is practically useful. Practically, it enables a plan for the individual towers to be developed in which eight of the nine apartments on each floor of every building have a river view, and it preserves a charming space as a private park for the tenants. But the site did more. To the north of the end of the pergola there was a slope which permitted the construction on the property of a large public garage in which tenants may keep their cars, with the roof of the garage down almost at the upper ground level so that it can be utilized for playgrounds and recreation. Thus, in a city site, tenants are assured of view and, because of the orientation of the buildings, in most cases of sun also, as well as of garages for their cars on the same property and of ample space for outdoor life in the warmer months. This usable outdoor space is also arranged to furnish quiet sitting places for adults and recreation areas for children.

The typical floor plans are extremely in-





CASTLE VILLAGE, BY GEORGE FRED PELHAM, JR., ARCHITECT, AS SEEN LOOKING NORTH ALONG CABRINI BOULEVARD. PHOTO BY A. F. SOZIO. TYPICAL UNIT PLAN APPEARS BELOW



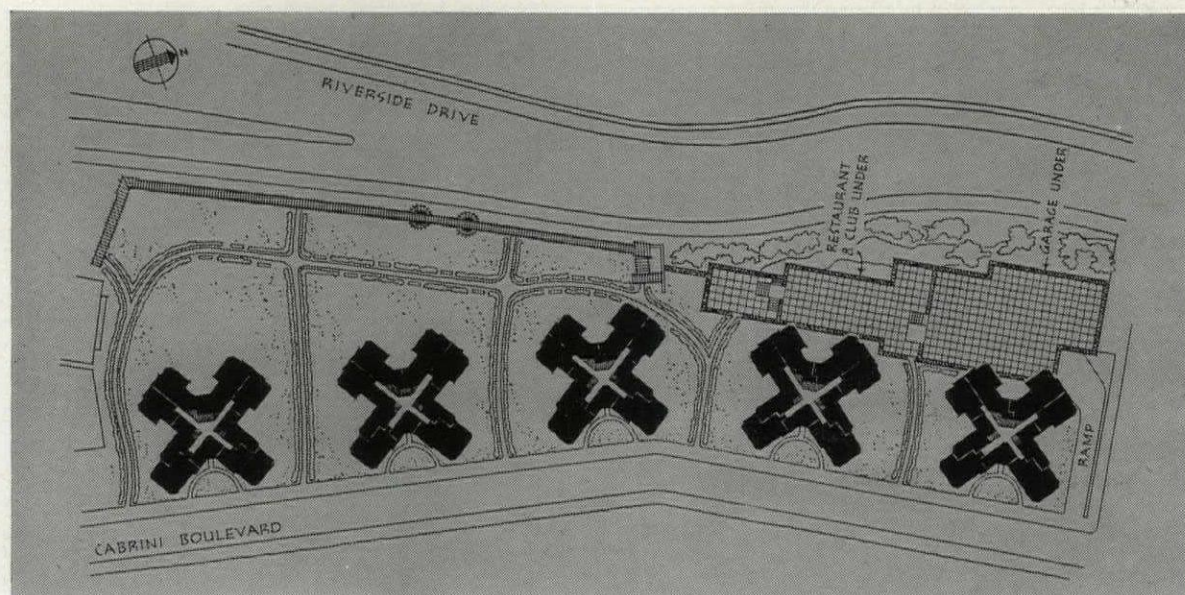
genious. In the layout the integration of the structural pattern of post and girder with the room layout has been immensely assisted by the clever and imaginative form of construction used. The buildings are of reinforced concrete, and this has enabled the designers to use columns which are long, thin rectangles in plan rather than the squares generally found. The spotting of these long slim columns has been excellently done, so that in most cases the slight breaks in the walls which they produce seem to add to rather than hurt the general sense of ample size the rooms possess. However, where corner windows are used, columns carrying the necessary cantilevers have to be placed next to these corner windows, and the breaks at this point are scarcely happy and often make furnishing difficult. Whether or not this is an argument against the corner window in such buildings is a question Castle Village does not answer. One can only say that in this single place the plans seem less studied than elsewhere.

The X-form necessitates long circulations from the central elevator lobby to the outside edges, where the living rooms are usually placed. To take up some of the space a so-called "Junior Room" is devised, arranged to be used as either a dining room, a play room for children, or a possible additional guest or child's bedroom, or a study. Now of course such a free and unassigned area is often a godsend in the old-fashioned house, but as developed here it frequently strikes one as a space perhaps chiefly usable as a secondary passage, and the firms which furnished the model apartments had obvious difficulties with its treatment. It is too small for real dining-room use, and besides, in the larger apartments at least, the foyers are of dining-room size. In some cases it has a fairly direct entrance to a bathroom, but in others it is so arranged that to get to any bathroom one has to go through a vestibule and the main foyer, which makes its spare-bedroom use difficult at best. However, the room sizes are pleasant and, for New York standards, ample, with living rooms averaging about 14' x 21', large bedrooms 14' x 16', and so on; also the windows

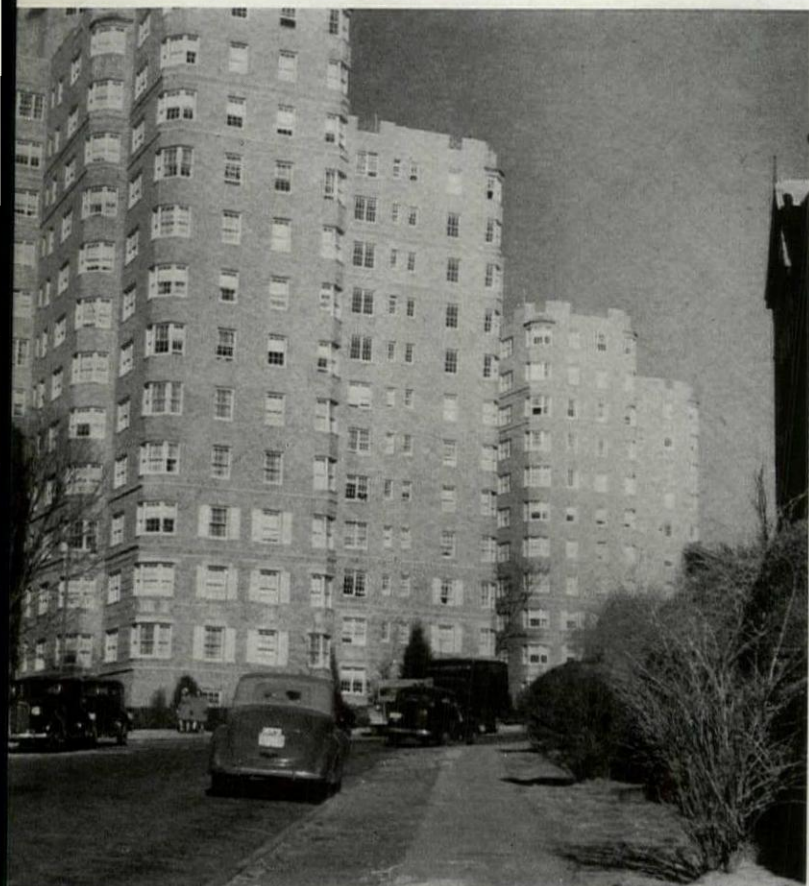




FROM RIVERSIDE DRIVE, CASTLE VILLAGE AP-  
PEARS AN IMPRESSIVE GROUP, ITS ROMANTIC  
MASSING ACCENTUATED BY THE OLD PER-  
GOLA. THIS PHOTOGRAPH BY F. S. LINCOLN







TWO MORE VIEWS OF CASTLE VILLAGE TAKEN FROM THE CABRINI BOULEVARD SIDE SHOW ITS PLEASANT RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER, HEIGHTENED BY JUDICIOUS PLANTING



are suitably arranged, especially in the living rooms, though at times the exigencies of exterior symmetry seem to have required too many and too small and too widely separated windows in some of the corner bedrooms, which prevents flexibility in the furnishing. Nevertheless, in comparison with the average apartment house plans of New York, these apartments are extremely pleasant, well ventilated, and livable.

The use of push-button elevators is increasing tremendously in the city. They have become almost standard for the smaller apartments; they are used in the Queensbridge and Red Hook housing developments; but, so far as I know, Castle Village introduces their first use on buildings twelve stories high and with so many apartments to a floor. There are two of these self-service elevators in each building and in addition a service elevator. It will be interesting to see how well this means of vertical communication serves the 108 apartments in each building, and how serious the delays may be during the rush hours in the morning and the afternoon.

Of the actual detailing of the exteriors of these buildings the best that can be said is that it is not too insistent. For some reason or other, in the effort to give, shall we say, a homelike character to these large structures, the designers felt it necessary to doll up the entrances in Washington Heights Colonial, and on the lower floors of the street fronts to add absolutely unworkable white-painted louvered blinds, attached to the walls on either side of some of the windows. This is altogether too bad, for the main lines of the buildings are excellent, and the backs where these completely useless details have been omitted are simple, strong, and agreeable in color. Fortunately it is these undecorated backs which face Riverside Drive and the Washington Bridge. From those points of view the buildings seem extremely effective, and the repeated vertical lines of light and shadow running up the breaks in the cross-shaped plan give them a fine plastic value. This is real three-dimensional architecture.

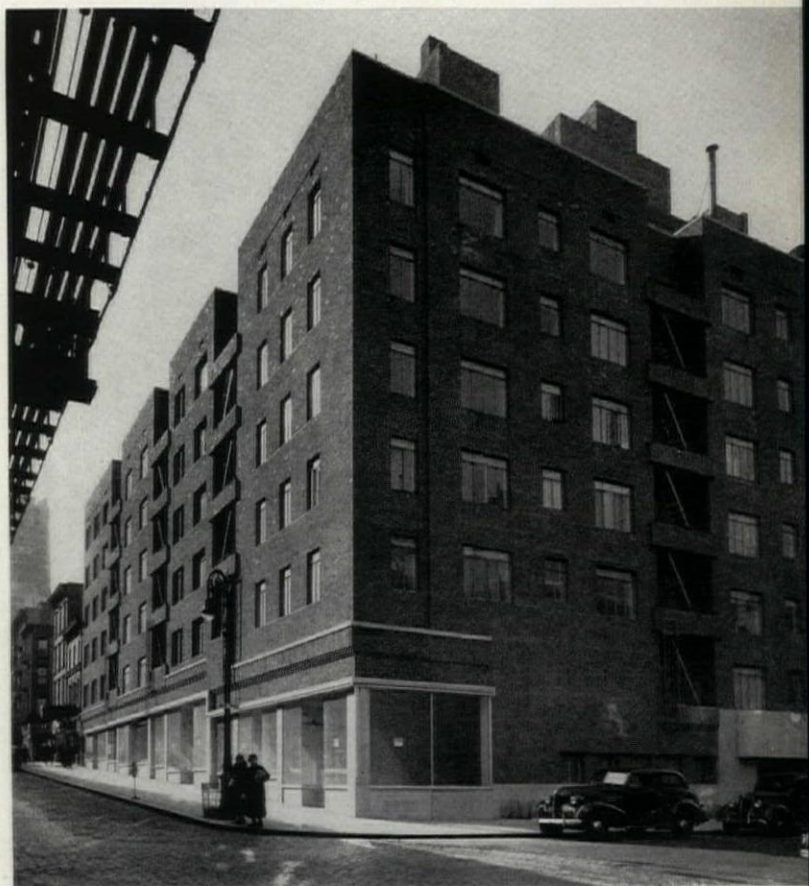
But the chief virtues which make this



group distinctive are matters of basic land usage and of large imagination in creating a delightful environment for urban living, which far transcend any questions of minor detail. Here for the first time is a vindication of vertical building as opposed to horizontal building even when the lot is large. Here for the first time on Manhattan is a group in which outdoor living and automobile storage have been made integral parts of the composition. The qualities of the site have been taken advantage of in the most creative possible way; the variety given to the street elevation by the rhythmical advance and retreat of the cross-shaped buildings is intriguing; and the discontinuous nature of the buildings—the fact that they are made five separate towers rather than one long row—allows the air and the sun from the west to flood into the street and give an unusual touch of gentle drama and amenity to the street itself.

This group, too, is another proof that the greatest uses of modern constructional methods and modern planning for large numbers of families can only be made when the lot area is large itself. Large lots enable recreation space and living space to be concentrated. Large-scale developments create a community value of their own and will set the atmosphere and determine the appearance of a city as no collection of small enterprises ever can. This group of Castle Village, with its five towers of red brick forcefully modeled in rhythmical vertical lines of shade and shadow and sun, rising from the long horizontal of the pergola and the garden terrace, forms a composed picture of great æsthetic effectiveness. It is a definite addition to the beauty of New York City and points the way, one may hope, to further experiments along similar lines—experiments in which the details of entrance and of window will be as masterly and as modern as the basic compositional mass.

The smaller type of investment apartment house is well represented in two examples, both on Second Avenue—one at the corner of 61st Street, by Horace Ginsbern, and one at the corner of 46th Street, by Rosario Candela. Built in evident anticipa-



APARTMENT HOUSE (ABOVE) AT 46TH STREET AND SECOND AVENUE BY ROSARIO CANDELA AND ANOTHER AT 61ST STREET BY HORACE GINSBERN. PHOTOS BY A. F. SOZIO







ENTRANCE HALL IN HORACE GINSBERN'S 61ST STREET APARTMENT HOUSE ON SECOND AVENUE

tion of the tearing down of the Second Avenue Elevated, these two apartment buildings are both in the higher-than-average rental field. Both are interesting attempts to give beauty and meaning to one of the most difficult architectural problems, in two contrasting ways.

The 61st Street example is perhaps the more imaginative of the two. It strives to set itself apart by the use of several different colors of brick, its southern and eastern fronts being basically of two tones of brick, red and purple-brown, whereas the north front is largely of cream; and the two contrasting elements thus developed are tied together by running the same color for window bands through both fields. The windows are agreeably spaced and proportioned, though the attempt to give a third-dimensional quality by using bays with canted sides in the living room windows, within the thickness of the walls, seems somewhat forced. Both these apartments have shops on the Second Avenue front; in the 61st Street example they are set off

from the field of wall and window above by a heavy band of purplish cast-stone, which runs back on the north face and turns down to enframe the large entrance. The whole of this 61st Street apartment has a vivid interest due especially to its color treatment, and its absolute geometric simplicity gives a form unity despite its variations in tone. It has, as all of these six-story non-fireproof apartments have, exterior fire escapes. In this building the two sets on the Second Avenue front project from the wall in the simple, direct, old-fashioned way, although one set on the north front is recessed. Certainly they do not add to the appearance. The Second Avenue façade is designed as though they did not exist, and their existence is a very real one, so that the effect is definitely clouded; this hardly seems an ideal solution.

The most brilliant and attractive thing in this apartment house is the entrance hall. Rich in color, with red marble, an interesting terrazzo floor, and walls painted cleverly in different colors to emphasize their



planes, and with a ceiling part of which is raised to give an amusing curved line, it has an unusually original character. It is lighted by a reception room which goes back to the rear wall, here made all of glass block, surrounding a group of windows; and this brilliant and effective lighting is picked up and brought into the center of the building by making one wall of the foyer almost entirely of mirror. The effect of the whole is definitely homelike and human in scale, just impersonal enough to indicate that it is a group of dwellings which is being entered, yet entirely lacking in that ostentatious sort of second-class hotel appearance on the one hand, or the effeminate, over-decorated, and over-decoratory delicacies on the other, which so often make apartment entrance halls things of horror.

The 46th Street example seeks to give æsthetic meaning, not by variations in color or forced attempts to surprise, but rather by the absolutely quiet uniformity of its brick work and by a careful study of mass composition. Here all of the fire escapes are recessed behind the building line, and a panel of brick is carried across at each balcony level to tie the whole together. The result, in giving interest to the skyline by breaking up the main mass of the building into a series of equal projecting pavilions, and in its perfectly frank acceptance of the existence of fire escapes as a definite part of the program, seems at least to me a more advanced and a more honest, as well as a more beautiful, solution than the other.

The same quality of search for quiet simplicity, for a dependence on the mere proportions of steel casements in height and width and their relations to each other and to the mass of the wall, gives the whole building a serene and gracious, reticent quality that is distinguished. And this same sense of under-statement, beautifully carried out, shows in the treatment of the shops, with their stainless steel window divisions and awning cornice, and in the way the entrance is treated. The entrance door is recessed, and the one white band which carries horizontally across the building above the shops acts as the soffit of this recess and car-

ries on over a group of low windows which slope back from the building line to the plane of the door. The result is unusually inviting, and the scale necessary to give the intimate domestic quality of all of this composition is surprisingly well related to the simple scale of the entire building.

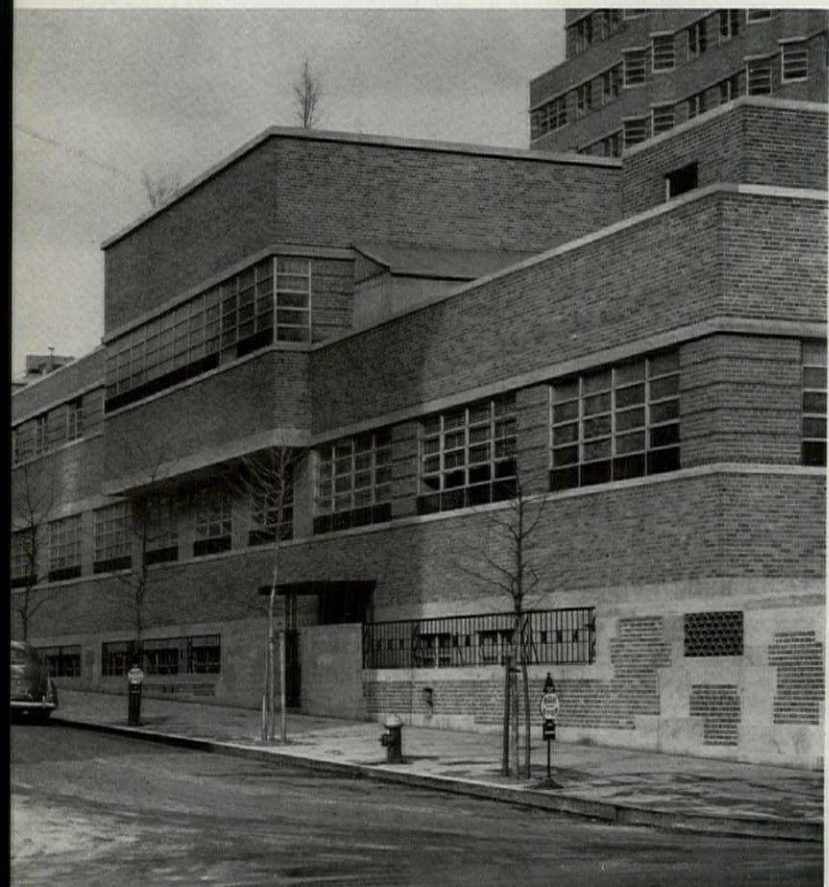
Now it is perfectly possible that neither of these buildings is "great architecture." They explore no new paths, as Castle Village does; in a sense they are routine examples of the better-class small apartment house built for investment. Yet what is important about both is the fact that they show a sensitiveness to architectural form that has been unfortunately rare in such work, as well as the fact that their architects were thoroughly aware of the æsthetic problems involved in combining a series of small dwellings and shops into a single building, and made sincere and successful attempts to cope with these problems. What is perhaps even more rare is that both are lacking in that general sense of showiness, that search for tricky and superficial effects, which has so frequently—nay, almost universally—been accepted as the first requirement in apartment house design.

It is particularly pleasant to be able to chronicle these quiet and effective speculative apartment houses in Manhattan, for from the outskirts in Queens come reports of a novelty even more absurd than many which have preceded it—Hollywood houses, no less—that is, the usual run-of-the-mill Long Island houses on which has been carefully placed, somewhere or other, an item copied as carefully as may be (though unfortunately "necessarily reduced in size") from a Star's residence in far-away California. How too, too romantic and perfectly darling (as the ads would put it)! Since these Stars' houses seem in most cases to have been designed on the basis of pick-and-choose eclecticism, and often imitate the far from original mansions of Eastern plutocrats, the new Long Island houses will become in truth a copy of a copy of a copy. This might be termed, perhaps, "eclecticism cubed"; but think of the opportunity it gives people to live in a house that has a window





THE NEW MEMORIAL HOSPITAL ON YORK AVENUE, JAMES GAMBLE ROGERS AND HENRY C. PELTON, ARCHITECTS ASSOCIATED. ALL PHOTOS OF THIS BUILDING BY A. F. SOZIO



or a door borrowed from that Seventh Heaven, the home of a favorite Star, even if it is, as the account says, "on a much smaller scale"!

But there are other interesting new structures on Manhattan besides apartment houses—especially the combined garage and office building of Rockefeller Center, the new Epiphany Church (of which more will be said in a later article), and the new Memorial Hospital on York Avenue.

The new Rockefeller Center building, by Harrison and Fouilhoux, and Reinhard & Hofmeister, associated, is interesting for many reasons: first, it is a valiant attack on the great urban problem of daytime parking; second, its simple form and reticent detail make it one of the most distinguished members of the Radio City group; and, lastly, there are many interesting details of treatment which give it unusual *éclat*. The great garage areas which fill the basement are entered from a driveway running through from street to street just east of the Center Theater. This drive passes between large cylindrical columns, so that one feels the steel pattern of the building carrying through unbroken. An interesting touch is given by the color treatment, for the columns are painted a lovely soft blue. And special interest is given to the northern entrance by the great curved end of the lower floors, chiefly in glass, a glittering element the sweeping curves of which give a much needed note of contrast to the elsewhere universal rectangularity of Rockefeller Center. This large glass area is carried uninterrupted from its curved beginning, all along the 49th Street front, and clean around the corner to the entrance motif. It is a daring and successful note; yet the whole unity of this continuous glass surface, with its delicate metal subdivisions, is wrecked from many points of view by the fact that the lower portions of the windows have all been made opaque. Whether this has been done to hide the view of the garage floors from the street or to help in the diffusion of light, I do not know; it looks like a temporary measure, but it has already been in place for months. Even if it is merely a



transient feature until rentals of the ground floor are made, one wishes that it had been carried over the entire surface of the windows and did not produce the sharp contrast which divides the composition almost in half and fogs its essential beauty. The rest of the building is a straightforward continuation of the rhythms and the details found in other portions of the group, but those few touches of the unbroken glass band, the superb western curved end, and the use of color in the automobile entrance all make one wish for many more examples of curved planes and uninterrupted window areas in our city streets. New York is perhaps the most aggressively rectangular of any of the really metropolitan cities, and occasional curves like this are all the more striking for their rarity, and show the restfulness and the grace which a freer use of them might provide.

It is again the magnificent use of glass which is one of the chief virtues of the Memorial Hospital by James Gamble Rogers and Henry C. Pelton, associated. Hospitals themselves tend to become buildings of character and beauty. The New York Hospital and Cornell Medical group nearby is still impressive, with its white walls and its expressive membering. The more recent Welfare Island Hospital, with its V-shaped wings, has quality and interest. The general scale of hospital parts and the basic necessity for simplicity and logical arrangement tend to make a program which builds naturally into imposing architectural forms. Perhaps the spirit behind large hospitals adds, too, for again and again in hospital design at its best one feels just that additional touch of loving care, of thorough study, of sensitive design which is the difference between the merely adequate and the beautiful building.

The Memorial Hospital is in general a worthy example of this fact; but in its details it is much more than that, for the lower wings, especially, and the wall, covered way, and gardens along the eastern front have a quality of distinction in design which is unusual in New York City. It is founded, like so much successful building,



THE YORK AVENUE SIDE AND THE SOUTH SIDE ALONG 67TH STREET ARE THE ARCHITECTURALLY MOST SATISFYING ASPECTS OF THE RECENTLY BUILT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL





on matters of proportion and rhythmic repetition; and to me the relationship of the heights of the window strips and the wall spandrels between is especially pleasing. Beautiful, too, is the emphasis on the horizontal line throughout; and the almost continuous windows, made all of long low panes, give a beautiful feeling of relaxed and effortless serenity.

And the detailing of this part is as effective as the general design. The stone bands at window sill and head project just sufficiently to give a needed emphasis, and the head band is emphasized by inclining its face outwards. These are little things, of course, but nowhere else in recent building can the importance of sensitive and imaginative detail be more clearly seen than in the difference between these lovely long low wings and many other buildings of similar general composition. The same feeling for detail characterizes the brick-and-stone wall which surrounds the property, especially its open grilles made of curved tile doubled and set scale-fashion. The ambulance entrance on this side is also an interesting piece of design; a broad, thin, flat slab forms the

*porte cochère* roof, and is supported on rich and delicate ironwork. To some the detail of this ironwork may appear unnecessarily complicated. Certainly a simpler treatment would have given a quieter feeling, more in harmony with the wings themselves; yet the entrance is remarkable for its sense of scale—its combination of size and delicacy, its welcoming effect, which makes this hospital approach far from the fearsome institutionalized gateway that is too frequently found.

When one goes around to the north side, the façade, there is a certain disappointment. It is hard at first to tell just why this occurs, but it seems plain that somehow all the charm, the real poetic and expressive beauty, of the rear and the sides of the building have vanished. A closer examination would seem to indicate that the source of this failure can be found in the fact that it is paper architecture. It is well composed, there is nothing obvious to criticize in its proportions or the relationships of its parts; but the more one looks at it the more one realizes that it has been studied as an elevation and not as a building. This is especially clear



A. F. SOZIO

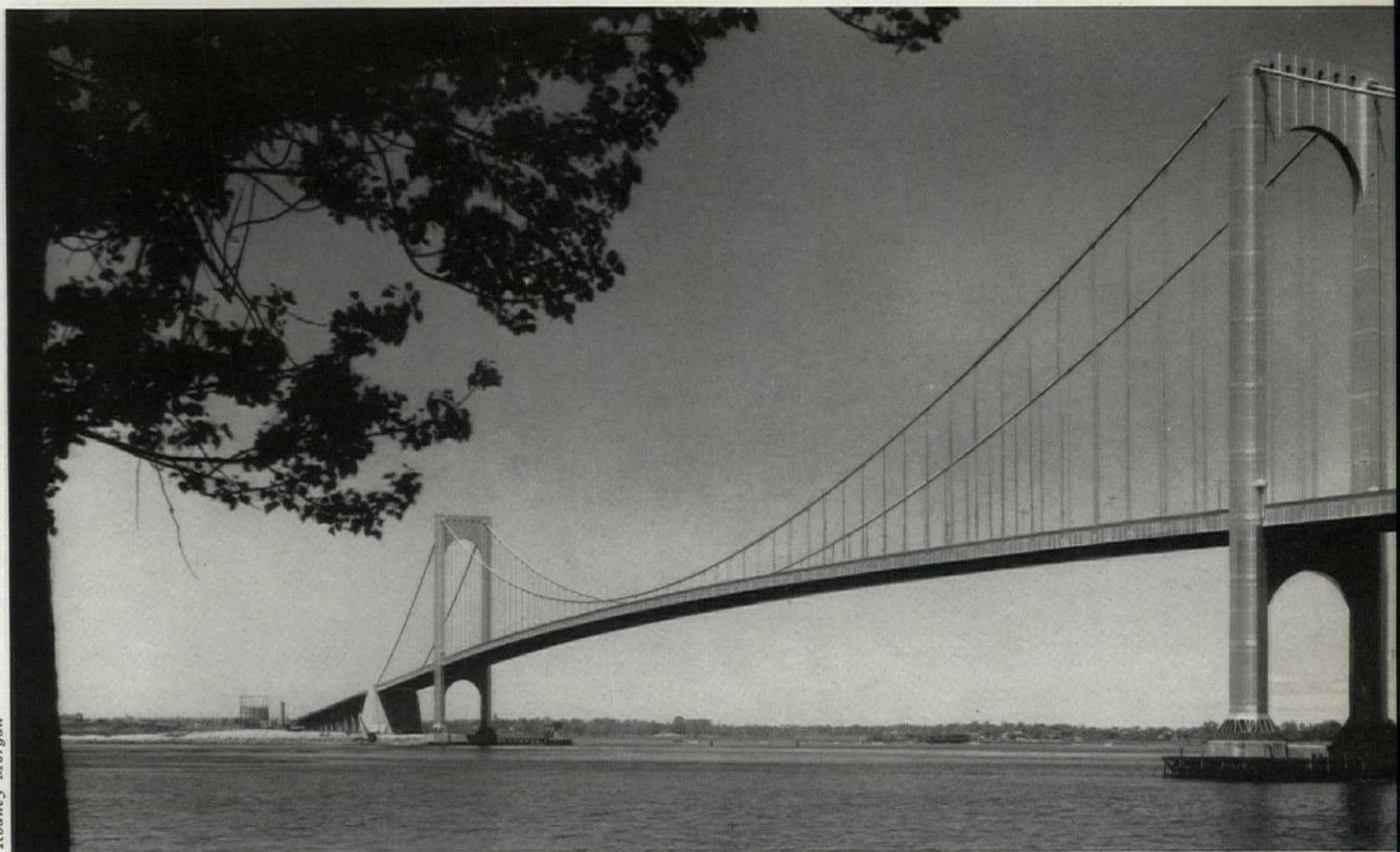


in the scale, for the whole scale treatment of this north front is designed in relation to the entire cliff-like mass. To the ordinary human being walking beside it, or entering its doors, it seems over-heavy, coarse, inhuman; it lacks almost entirely the qualities of natural scale which the rest of the building possesses. Similarly, the large stone pilasters which form a sort of simulated colonnade along the lower part of the front must have looked beautiful in the elevation; in a sense, in the building they still look well, but they do not *feel* well. They seem to have no sufficient reason for being; and, since the secret of the beauty of much of the rest of the building lies precisely in the avoidance of unnecessary elements and the careful study of those which are necessary, this sudden intrusion of an applied architecture cannot but be a blight. And it has the wrong expression. If the building were entered by a great band of doors stretching across the entire front, one might have accepted this treatment as an indication of this quality; but, since there are only two doors, and those comparatively small, and since in practice only one of these—not in

the center—is used by the public, the whole elaborate machinery of these large fluted pilasters or piers seems deceptive.

Memorial Hospital brings up an interesting and perhaps significant general fact—that in many buildings the rear is more attractive than the front. It is so, as we have already noted, in the case of Castle Village; it is so in the case of the New York Public Library; it is manifestly so in the Memorial Hospital. Is it that a too long study of the front elevation blinds the designer to actualities, gets him thinking rather in paper relationships than in the realities of the completed building? Is it possibly that a suppressed urge to decorate comes out in building fronts, to fog the clarity of the original composition? In any case, it is a subject that warrants deep thinking about. The really architectural building has no façade or is all façade, one or the other; when it occupies an entire block and can be seen from all sides it is as much a piece of three-

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE APPROACH AT RIVERSIDE DRIVE AND THE WHITESTONE BRIDGE MERIT HIGH PRAISE



Rodney Morgan



dimensional design as sculpture, and the artificial choice of one particular side to become the front upsets this pure three-dimensional conception. Yet, in spite of the comparative weakness of its north front, the Memorial Hospital is a building of rare distinction in rhythm and in detail; and the perfect continuity of its long horizontals in the southern wings, the loveliness of their proportions, and the effectiveness of their careful detail, the imaginative quality of the York Avenue garden, its covered way, and the wall, and the human and intimate character of the subsidiary entrances all go to make up one of the loveliest combinations of street views to be obtained on Manhattan Island. Here is modern architecture which is not only as human as any older work, but more so; not only as gracious, but even more pleasant because of the freedoms our modern structural methods and our modern materials bring with them.

New York has been singularly fortunate also in some of its recent public works, especially the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge and the Manhattan approach to the George Washington Bridge. The problem of the latter was particularly difficult, for all the major structural work had already been done in accordance with an earlier and abandoned design. To take this existing basis and to design for it a completion which should be an adequate facing of the existing construction, and also a composition in essential harmony with all of the Riverside Drive work, and in general with the simpler ideas of today's architecture, was no easy task. Aymar Embury made two proposals. The first, a stunning concrete composition for the anchorage, designed to emphasize the stress lines, was obviously out of accord with the natural stone used in the park walls, and would have been so colossal in scale as to belittle everything in its neighborhood. As a result he prepared the final design in a simpler manner, using large surfaces of native stone and allowing the masses to count in all their unpretentious grandeur without any attempts at over-dramatic emphasis. The result is essentially satisfactory; at last the great approaches to this majestic

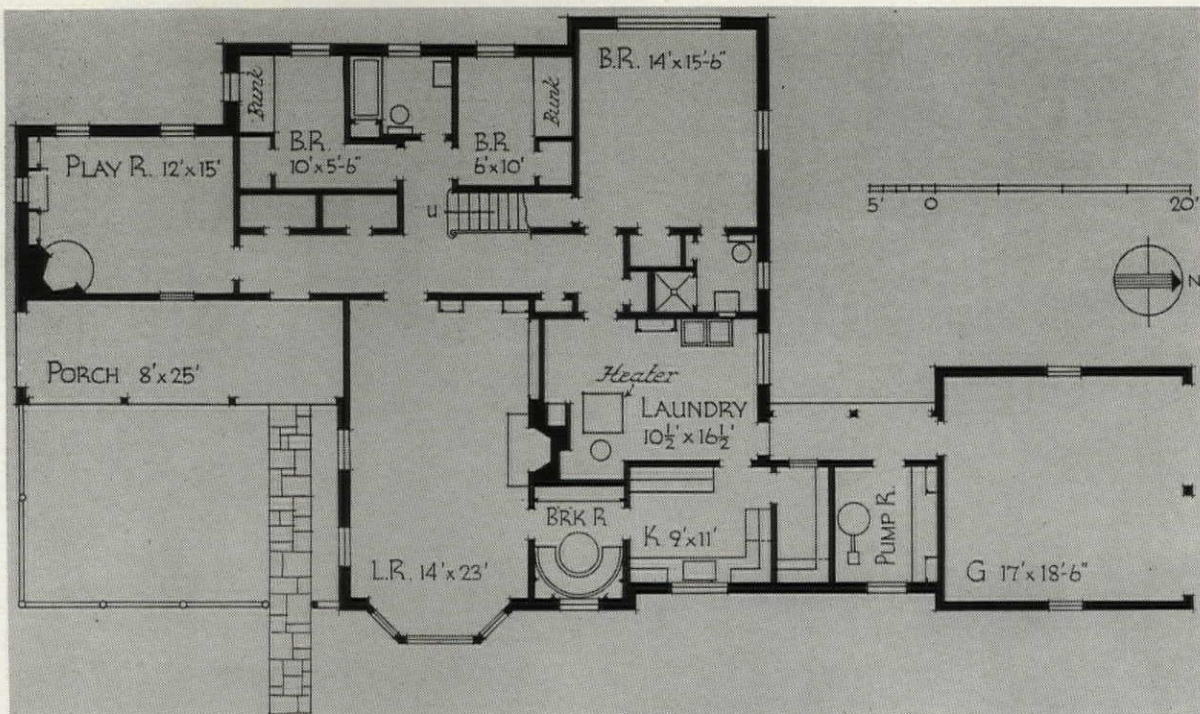
bridge blend in with Riverside Park and add to it elements of real beauty, simply designed. Interesting, too, is the handling of many of the details in connection with this work, such as the attractive bus station shelters, with their simple metal and glass. The tunnel under the ridge to the east leading across the island is not yet open, but the great curving arcaded viaduct which debouches from it and rises to connect with Amsterdam Avenue is far enough along to make one realize the tremendous monumental conceptions modern traffic requirements frequently make necessary.

The Bronx-Whitestone Bridge is the most beautiful suspension bridge I have ever seen. Here, finally, the simplicity of the general suspension bridge scheme—braced supports for the cables and the lightest and most delicate roadway—has received a sure expression, at the hands, again, of Aymar Embury. Nothing could be more effective than the simple powerful towers, with their top arched brace, their exquisite lightness, and yet their sense of strength. In no other bridge that I know do they seem so completely a part of the whole, so entirely an expression of the graceful strength of steel, so basically one with the lovely curves of the looping catenary cables. The concrete work is equally daring and equally successful in the way its shape follows the needs. Especially exciting are the anchorage blocks, in which one can sense not only the great weight necessary to secure the cable ends, but even the way the cables are arranged and the stresses directed. It is a *tour de force*, to be sure, depending for its success on sensitive detailing and the fortunate fact that these anchorage forms were not over-large. The whole bridge is designed with a similar finesse. Here one feels at once, more than in the George Washington Bridge, more even than in the great bridges of San Francisco, that this is a new kind of beauty, simple and direct and true, caused by the complete acceptance of the conditions of the materials and their functions. From this point of view the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge is perhaps New York's greatest piece of modern architecture.

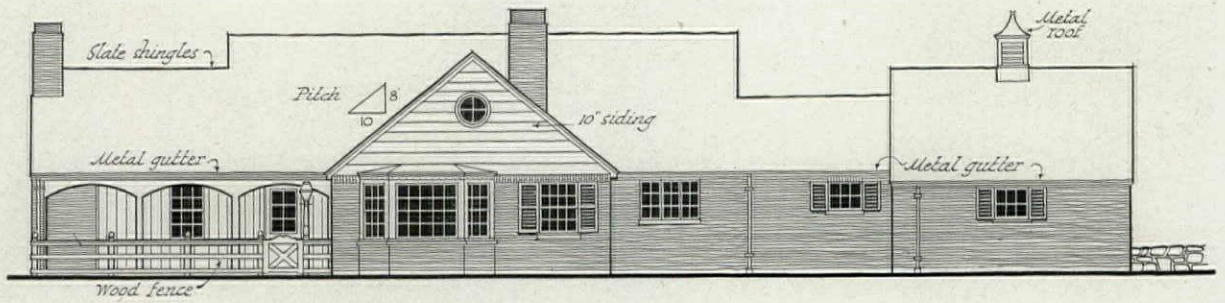




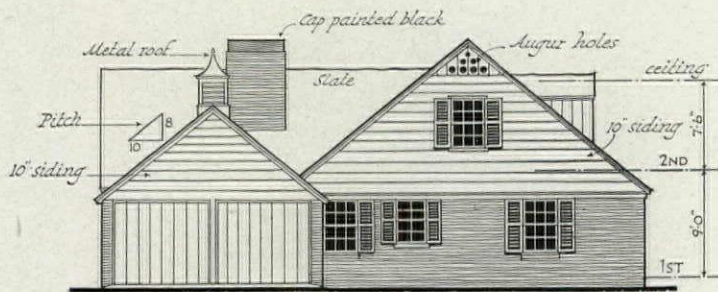
MAX COLTER OF DETROIT CONTRIBUTES THIS MONTH ANOTHER MODERATELY SMALL HOUSE IN THE AMERICAN TRADITION. THIS ONE WAS DESIGNED BY HIM FOR MORRISON TAYLOR, ESQ. AND MAY BE INTERESTING TO COMPARE WITH THE ENSIGN RESIDENCE PUBLISHED IN PENCIL POINTS LAST JUNE. IN THIS EXAMPLE THE PRINCIPAL ROOMS ARE ALL PLACED ON ONE FLOOR



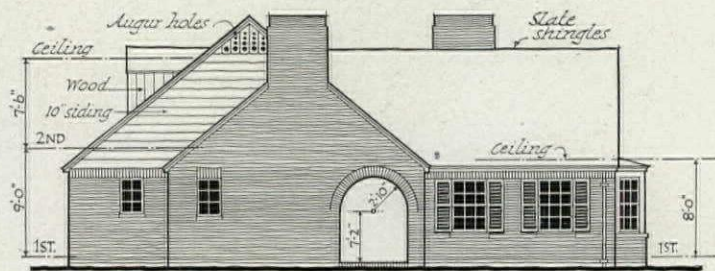




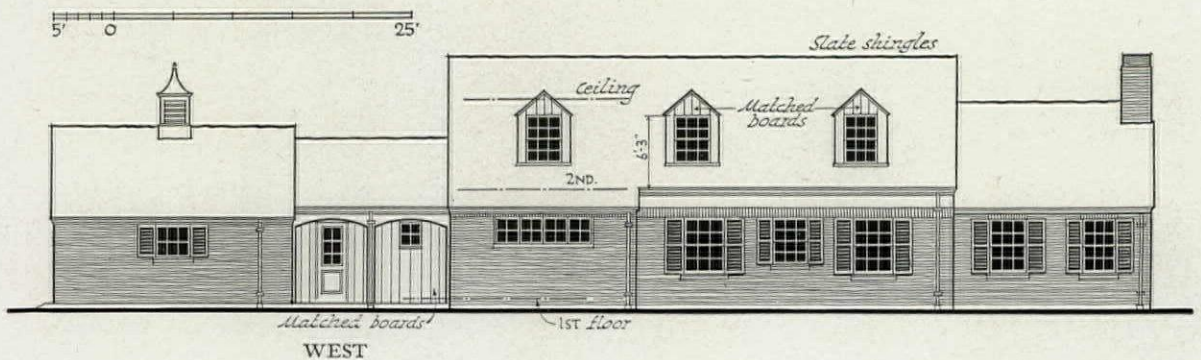
EAST



NORTH



SOUTH



WEST

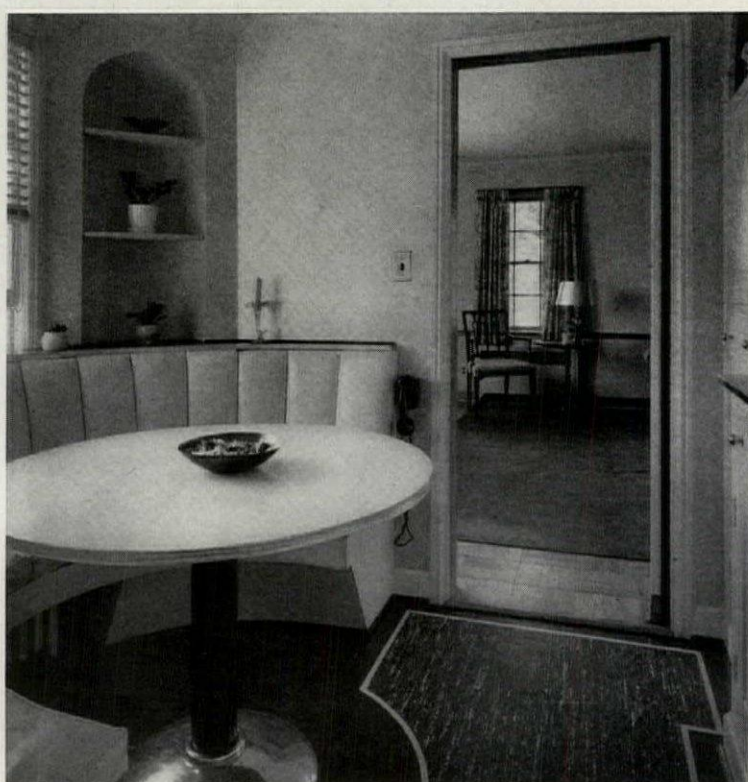
THE PLAN OF THE MORRISON TAYLOR RESIDENCE LENT ITSELF TO INTERESTINGLY DISPOSED ELEVATIONS. ROOFS OF GRAY-BLACK SLATE, WOOD AND BRICK WALLS PAINTED WHITE, AND DARK BLUE-GREEN SHUTTERS MAKE A SIMPLE AND UNOBTRUSIVE COLOR SCHEME APPROPRIATE TO AN AMERICAN SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD. CHIMNEYS ARE WHITE WITH BLACK CAPS





A DETAIL VIEW OF THE SOUTHEAST CORNER SHOWS THE LIVING ROOM BAY WITH ITS SIMPLE YET EFFECTIVE DETAIL AT THE EAVES LINE. HOUSES LIKE THIS, WHICH APPEAL TO THE CONSERVATIVELY MINDED CLIENT, GET THEIR ARCHITECTURAL EFFECT THROUGH RESTRAINT AND GOOD TASTE IN DESIGN. ALL PHOTOGRAPHS OF THIS HOUSE ARE BY ROBERT W. TEBBS





A BROWN LINOLEUM FLOOR, OLD PINE WAINSCOT, AND A YELLOW CEILING GIVE THE CHILD'S PLAY ROOM A WARM AND COMFORTABLE FEELING. CUPBOARDS FOR TOY STORAGE ARE DESIGNED TO BE JUST AS USEFUL WHEN THE ROOM IS USED FOR OTHER PURPOSES LATER ON. AT THE LEFT IS A DETAIL OF THE BREAKFAST NOOK TUCKED IN BETWEEN KITCHEN AND LIVING-DINING ROOM. HERE THE CEILING IS YELLOW, THE WALLS ARE PAPERED SILVER, THE TABLE TOP AND SEAT ARE OYSTER WHITE, AND THE FLOOR IS BLACK AND GRAY LINOLEUM. ALL PHOTOGRAPHS OF THIS HOUSE BY ROBERT W. TEBBS





FOR THE LIVING ROOM OF THE MORRISON TAYLOR RESIDENCE, MAX COLTER PROVIDED DARK OAK WOOD BLOCK FLOOR, HONEY COLORED PINE WOODWORK, WALLS OF PEACOCK BLUE PAINTED PLASTER, AND CEILING PAINTED A DARKER SHADE OF THE SAME BLUE. A SIMPLE DESK BUILT INTO THE BOOK SHELVES HELPS TO ECONOMIZE SPACE. ALL PHOTOS BY TEBBS





THE HEAVENS



PRIMITIVE SCIENCE

SCULPTURES BY SIDNEY WAUGH ADORN THE NEW BUHL PLANETARIUM IN PITTSBURGH FOR WHICH INGHAM AND BOYD ARE THE ARCHITECTS. THE SMALL CUT OPPOSITE SHOWS THE PLACING OF THE LIMESTONE PANELS IN RELATION TO THE DOORS. THE BRONZE FIGURES ARE FINISHED WITH GOLD LEAF AND ARE SET AGAINST PANELS OF RED GRANITE. THE MATERIAL OF THE FACADE IS BUFF COLORED LIMESTONE





MODERN SCIENCE

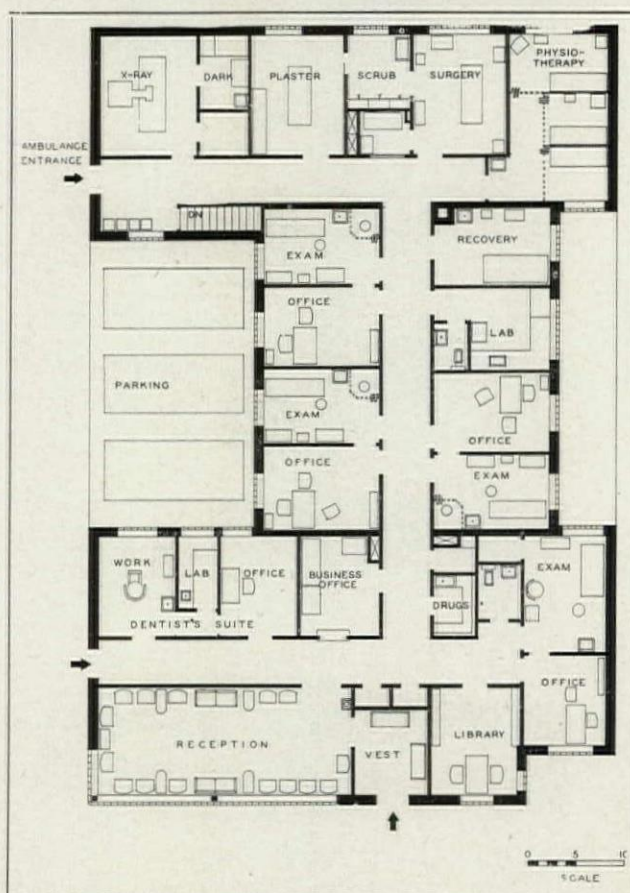


THE EARTH



S. J. LINK PHOTOGRAPHED THE STONE PANELS, DOORS AND  
MODEL PICTURES ARE BY NEWMAN-SCHMIDT STUDIOS



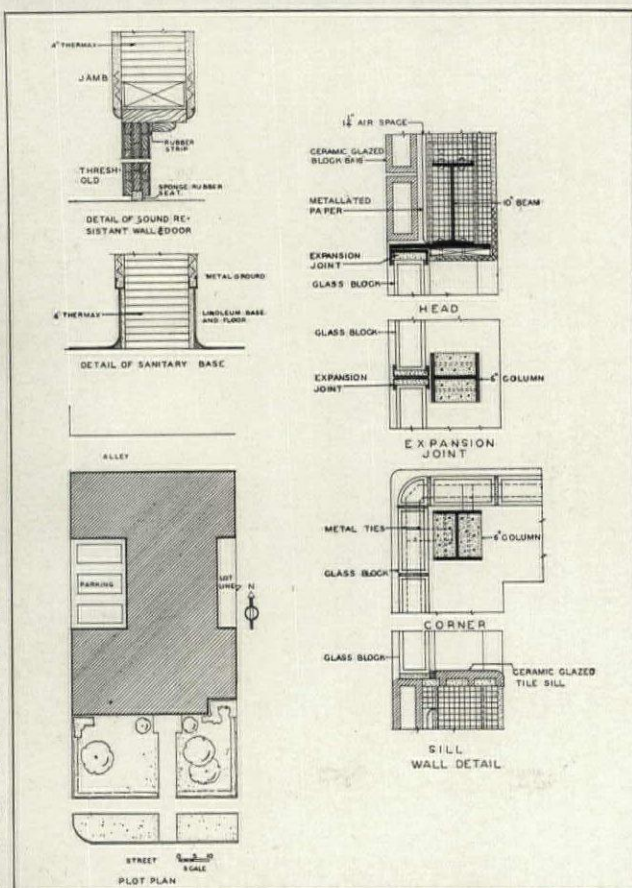


THE MCFARLAND MEDICAL BUILDING BY KIMBALL & BOWERS, ARCHITECTS, OF AMES, IOWA, WAS DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE THE PRACTICE OF A GROUP OF PHYSICIANS. LOCATED CENTRALLY IN THE BUSINESS DISTRICT, ON A PLOT MEASURING 55 FEET BY 80 FEET, ITS ONE FLOOR IS AT GRADE LEVEL, PERMITTING ACCESS AND COMPLETE CIRCULATION WITHOUT STEPS, IMPORTANT TO HEART PATIENTS. MATTE GLAZED BUFF TILE WALLS, GLASS BLOCK LIGHTING, AND STAINLESS STEEL CANOPY GIVE THE EXTERIOR IMPRESSION. CONSTRUCTION WAS ARRANGED TO ELIMINATE NOISE, WITH SOUND RESISTANT DOORS, WALLS, AND CEILINGS. MATERIALS WERE CHOSEN FOR SANITARY CONSIDERATIONS; LINOLEUM FLOORS WITH SANITARY BASE, SLAB DOORS, GLASS

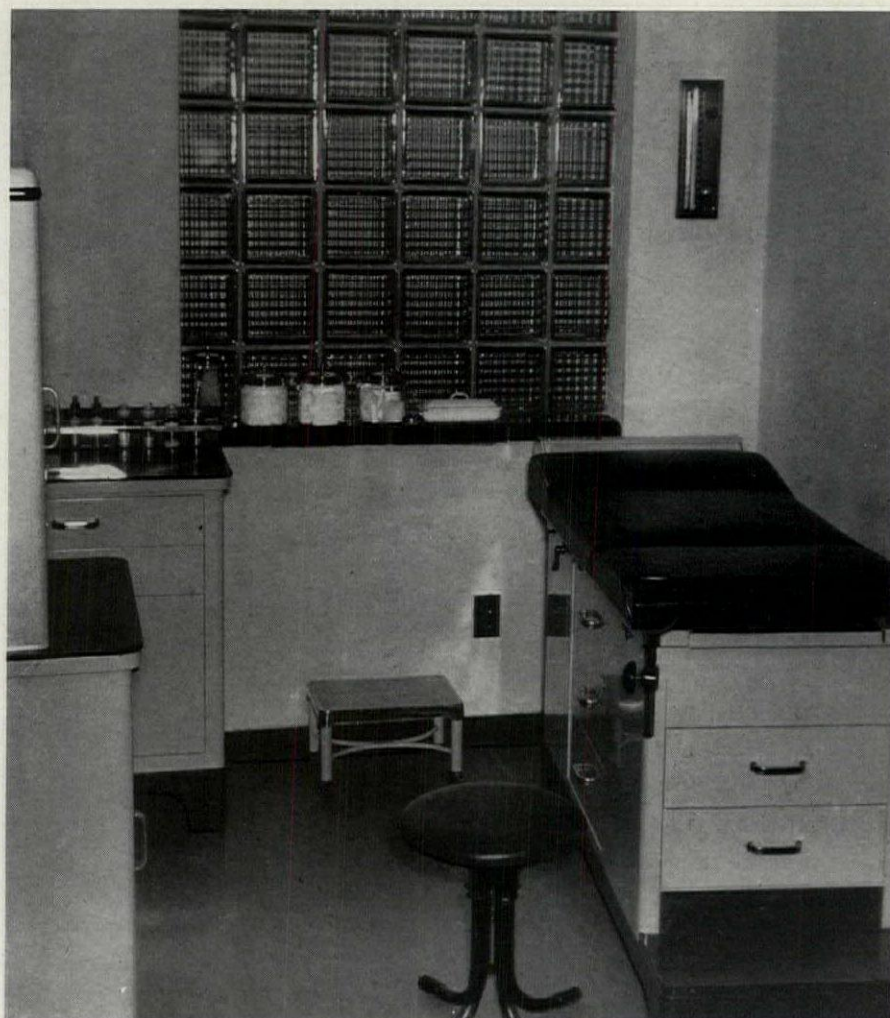




BLOCK, CERAMIC GLAZED TILE SILLS, METAL TRIM, ETC. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF AN AVAILABLE WELL FOR COLD WATER SUPPLY, THE BUILDING IS AIR-CONDITIONED IN SUMMER AS WELL AS IN WINTER. THE VIEW HERE IS IN THE RECEPTION ROOM. A DETAIL OF THE ENTRANCE AND THE INTERIOR OF ONE OF THE EXAMINATION ROOMS WHICH IS TYPICAL OF THE SMALL ROOMS ARE SHOWN OVERLEAF. IN THE RECEPTION ROOM THE FLOOR IS LINOLEUM OF A DARK PIGSKIN COLOR, THE BASE IS SANITARY BLACK ASPHALT TILE, WALLS AND METAL DOOR TRIM ARE PAINTED BUFF, DOORS AND JAMBS ARE BIRCH, STAINED HENNA COLOR. FURNITURE IN VARIOUS COLORS OF LEATHER INTRODUCES SPOTS OF RICH COLOR TO ENLIVEN THE INTERIOR







DETAILS OF THE  
MCFARLAND MEDI-  
CAL BUILDING AT  
AMES, IOWA, AS DE-  
SIGN BY KIMBALL  
& BOWERS, ARCHI-  
TECTS. MAIN EN-  
TRANCE WITH  
BLACK TILE BORDER  
AND INTERIOR OF AN  
EXAMINING ROOM