A SMALL HOUSE—Robert Barton
FURNISHING THE HOME—Graham Dawson
BUILDING WITH N.Z. MATERIALS—Charles Fearnley
ART SCHOLARSHIP WINNER
GRAMOPHONE NOTES—John Gray
NOTES ON FILMS—John O'Shea
Fluorescent lights in "Perspex"!

The undisputed efficiency of fluorescent lighting has a very important place in modern architecture and building. Today fluorescent lighting has changed from bare austere tubes and plain severe shields to fittings of taste and elegance to grace home or hotel, commercial building or office. I.C.I.'s "Perspex" and other plastics have made a major contribution in this development from austerity to practical beauty. In "Perspex" the electrical designer has a perfect material. It is available in a wide selection of differing qualities from light scattering opals to opaque diffuse reflectors and clear and reeded. "Perspex" is simple to work and in many designs can be "sprung" into position without clumsy fixing. "Perspex" is so adaptable that for major works it is possible for the architect to design "custom built" fittings. "Perspex" also has a very practical use in vinegar, pickling and similar industries in the form of corrosion proof fittings. Transport lighting is another important field where "Perspex"'s shatter resistant characteristics are useful. "Crinotene," a thin but tough flexible sheet with a light scattering textured surface which is pleasing whether illuminated or not, is another important plastic used extensively in tubular lighting. Again the architect has wide scope with this material for special custom designs.

Bottom: two tube "Perspex" fitting by Westonhouse Radio Ltd., Auckland.
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HERE AND THERE

The city of Wellington is about to plunge itself heavily into debt. We as citizens have recently gone to the polls to approve the expenditure of no less than one and a half million pounds on an impressive works programme calculated to lift the wrinkled face of our capital city. A tidy sum, but we are told that it will not necessarily entail a major increase in rates, and so, in the name of civic progress, and with a gratifying sense of doing the right thing, we cast our approving vote and leave the rest to posterity.

I must confess, however, to a sneaking but persistent feeling that Dear Old Pesty in her own good time may not be quite as enthusiastic about accepting this burden as we are in passing it on. She may, for instance, quite innocently ask:

How much was spent on perpetuating mistakes in a road system which was laid out originally for the horse and cart?

How much was literally poured down a far-flung and uneconomic drainage system?

How much, if any, was devoted to rehabilitating that more than slightly rotten core of the city—Te Aro Flats?

In short, did they have an overall development plan which would ensure that all available resources over the years would be intelligently directed towards creating a sounder, more efficient, and more beautiful city? And, if so, was this plan fully discussed by the citizens amongst themselves and in public places before general approval was given, so that the conscientious ratepayer could vote with confidence for its implementation?

These may be classed as awkward questions, which, however, do not really concern us now and so cannot possibly spoil our fun at the races. Dear Old Pesty may get off her bicycle and call us inept fiddlers, and thoughtless snuffboxes, but more likely she will take a charitable view and say: ‘They knew not exactly what they were about, but probably meant well.’

No one has ever denied that Wellington is one of the most haphazardly laid out of cities. There has been more talked and less done about town planning in Wellington than in any other city. From time to time the City Council makes some ill-considered statement as a sop to public demand which has so far been effective in keeping back pressure on the Council. One action which held hope of being more than a sop was the setting up nearly three years ago of the Regional Planning Commission, complete with town planner and a small staff. Its responsibility was for the whole metropolitan area, similar in function to the Auckland Metropolitan Planning Commission, which has already published proposals for its own more complex area. Since its inception no more has been heard of the Regional Planning Commission. We know that the planner is still there and that he has some staff, but no plan, not even the barest of outline plans, has been seen outside the closed doors of the Commission’s meetings. A statement on the work and achievements of this Commission is overdue.
THE FIREPLACE is the focal point of any room – large or small. The modern thought on interior decoration calls for a tile surround that does not dominate the room but blends tastefully with the general decorative scheme. Petrous Tile surrounds are designed with this end in view. Characterful design and clever blending of plain and figured tiles enhance the original artistry of Britain's leading tile makers. You may choose your tiles from recent shipments; Select a surround design by Petrous or have your own design made to order.

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Thus well shaped beer mug is made by an Auckland pottery. The glaze is matt white. The decoration is rust-coloured. If more care had been given to the design on the mug, which is rather tight and timid—in other words, if a first-rate artist had been employed to decorate it—we might have had something to be proud of. But at least its shape is good and that is the first step. Let us hope that next time the generous curves and flowing line will be matched by the decoration.

Of all the arts, architecture has most to gain by breaking down that isolation of one art from another which is such an unhappy symptom of the cultural disorganization of our time. Painters and sculptors, poets and musicians and film directors work together to a certain extent, but architects exist for the most part as a separate professional community. They are business men and technical men, as well as artists, and for some reason it is chiefly their fellow technicians with whom they have the closest association.

Contemporary architects badly need the breadth of outlook which a familiarity with development in all the other arts would give them, and especially they need to take an interest in painters' experiments with colour and sculptors' experiments with form. Conversely, painters and sculptors—if they are not going to become completely cut off from their wide public and work only for a gallery-going intelligentsia—need the chance of working at real jobs that only architecture can provide for them. Sculpture, after all, began as the embellishment of architecture, and becomes most alive when it forms part of a building or is designed in relation to an architectural setting.

J. M. Richards

TREND INFLUENCES . . .

Contemporary domestic and commercial architecture shows a marked increase in the use of glass with a correspondingly greater degree of ventilation required. The wide range of application offered by Cooper Adjustable Glass Louvres affords architects the opportunity of developing window designs that are both pleasing and essentially functional.

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MODERN EXTERIOR PROTECTION
HOW TO OVERCOME MOULD GROWTH

The fungus mould growth on exterior weatherboarding can be a costly business for it means the walls need repainting far earlier than they would under normal wear. Much can be done to check the growth of this fungus from the start and so eliminate early repainting.

B.A.L.M. have issued a specification showing the correct methods for exterior paint application and with it they emphasise that both 87 Line Undercoat and Dulux House paint have been formulated to provide surfaces highly resistant to infestation with mould growths.

That surely, is the answer to the trouble; to avoid it from the beginning. However, the specifications given here show the treatment they advise if the walls already show discolouration from mould growths.

Exterior Painting Specifications

DULUX HI-GLOSS HOUSE
PAINT—87 LINE

A. NEW WOODWORK—EXCLUDING TOTARA

Operation 1: Prime with one brush coat of B.A.L.M. Primer for Dulux Hi-Gloss Paint on B.A.L.M. Pink Primer P.T.1. Allow 24 hours to dry.

Operation 2: Brush one coat of B.A.L.M. Undercoat for Dulux Hi-Gloss Paint. Allow 24 hours to dry.

Operation 3: Repeat Operation 2.

Operation 4: Brush one coat of Dulux Hi-Gloss Paint 87 Line as received in the container.

N.B.: Whereas a three-coat specification is detailed above, it is recommended that a second coat of Dulux Undercoat 98 Line be applied prior to the application of the finishing coat. This is particularly recommended where undue time may elapse from the priming to the undercoating stage.

C. REPAINTING OVER OLD PAINT SURFACES IN REASONABLE CONDITION

Operation 1: Thoroughly clean down job, sanding where necessary to remove ingrained dirt.

Operation 2: Brush one coat B.A.L.M. Undercoat for Dulux Hi-Gloss Paint. Allow to dry 24 hours before recoating.

N.B.: Depending on the porosity of the old surface, it may be advisable to reduce the undercoat with up to ¼ gal. of Linseed Oil per gallon.

Operation 3: Brush one coat Dulux Hi-Gloss House Paint 87 Line as received in the container.

D. REPAINTING OVER OLD PAINT SURFACES IN BADLY WEATHERED CONDITION

Operation 1: Clean down thoroughly by sanding, wire brushing and burning off where necessary.

Operations 2, 3, and 4: As for Operations 1, 2, and 3 for New Woodwork.

E. REPAINTING OVER OLD PAINT SURFACES DISCOLOURED BY MOULD GROWTHS

Operation 1: Kill all mould growths by brushing on the surface a liberal coating of one of the following solutions:
(a) “Santabrite” solution (1lb to 5 gallons of water).
(b) Shirian W.S. solution (1lb to 5 gallons of water).

Allow to dry out thoroughly, and prepare job by brushing down and sanding where necessary.

Operation 2: Brush one coat B.A.L.M. Undercoat for Dulux Hi-Gloss Paint and allow 24 hours before recoating.

Operation 3: If surface is badly discoloured, repeat Operation 2.

Operation 4: Brush Dulux Hi-Gloss Paint as received in the container.

Any additional information on this subject, or any other paint problem will be gladly supplied if enquiries are sent to: The Technical Service Dept., The British Australian Lead Manufacturers (N.Z.) Ltd., Lower Hutt.
FURNISHING THE HOME

Graham Dawson

Simplicity

The main theme this time is simplicity—not the simplicity of barrenness or lack of interest, but a simplicity showing that each thing has received its full measure of thought.

On going into a room one should not have the feeling of confusion associated with an old-fashioned museum or the country store where one gets everything from gum drops to gum boots, nor should a sideboard remind one of that awful game when a trayful of miscellaneous articles is unveiled for half a minute and the unfortunate players are required to write a list of as many articles as they can remember.

Simple to maintain

Simplicity is important in everything about a house. Arrange your house so that it is simple to clean and maintain; so that meals can be prepared and served easily. Have in each room only the furniture required for what is done in that room and arrange it as far as you can so that the activities do not overlap or interfere with one another. This is the practical approach and, while it cannot be expected to take us all the way in decorating and furnishing, it is the essential basis without which nothing you can do will be a success.

A reason for everything

There is the story of a little girl whose scheme for improving her home was judged the best in her class. Her father was a carpenter and her mother a dressmaker and they lived in three rooms in an old house in a crowded part of town. The only window of their living room was a few feet from the brick wall of a factory next door, and they were living for the time when they could build a little house and live well out of town. The little girl said she was not interested in art, but just put down what she wanted and she was very practical. She planned to have her father, in his spare time, paint the walls of their living room the yellow of the sunshine they never saw, and the floor the colour of rich red earth. He was to put a wide shelf across the window at sill height to hold pots of red geraniums so that her mother might feel she had the garden she longed for. The window was to be curtained with butter muslin to let in as much light as possible, while partly hiding the brick wall opposite.

The table was to be put at the right-hand side of the window close to the kitchen, to be handy for meals and so that her mother would have a good light for cutting out during the day. She herself would use it in the evenings for homework. Her mother was to make green slip covers for the chairs to remind them all of grass and green trees. Her mother’s chair was to be near the window and the plants, with the shelf for her sewing materials. Her father’s, the most comfortable chair, would be across the room near the radio, with a lamp beside it so that he could rest and read of an evening. The rugs for the floor were to be buff in colour to help to keep the room light, but they would be small enough to be picked up and shaken and easily cleaned when necessary.

Everything in this girl’s scheme for her home had a reason for being as it was. Everything tended towards the general effect by relating the furnishings to a particular purpose and the people who were to use them.

A house is a unit

The simplest number is one, so when you are decorating your house think of it not so much as a number of rooms but as one house. The rooms should appear to belong to one another. Avoid violent changes in colour scheme or character in furnishing from one room to another. For instance, if your entrance hall has a green motled lino on the
floor and a pale green-toned wallpaper, it would be a mistake to use in the living room a paper with pink flowers on a blue ground. Again, if your living room is furnished with highly finished mahogany, avoid the shock of going through to a dining room with chromium-plated steel-tube furniture. This does not mean that variations of colour scheme and type of furniture cannot be made, but see that they are not so great as to make the rooms seem as if they belonged to different houses or to different families.

In the colour scheme of a room it is a good rule to keep in mind that the more colours you use the more difficult will be your problem. In other words, be simple, choose a dominant scheme of two or three colours and have everything conform to it. Naturally you will be liable to use other colours than those of your basic scheme in such things as a bowl of flowers or a painting on the wall, but it is only by being careful to avoid a complicated colour scheme that such accents as your flowers or your painting will have the value you intend.

The familiar requires criticism
It takes considerable effort to be really critical of our own surroundings. Those things with which we are intimately associated tend to be taken for granted and hardly seen. If we see it every day we eventually forget to wonder whether that picture, that lampshade or that ornamental vase is really worthy of the place we give it. The lesson from this is to examine our reactions, not on coming home, but on going to some other house. What do we see when we enter a room? Do our eyes move easily from place to place and light only here and there on something really worth their attention; or, on the other hand, is our attention constantly diverted from striped wallpaper to jazzy pattern carpet, to fringed lampshade, to decorated vase, to hammered brass firescreen, to pictures on the wall all around the room, all at different levels and all clamouring for attention? The answer is, of course, simplicity. To be good—that is, good for the purpose it is to fulfill—and good in quality a thing does not have to call attention to itself. In fact, the purpose of most of our things is usually the better fulfilled if they are inconspicuous. What do we have a lampshade for? Is it not to shield the brilliant source of the light from our eyes and to distribute the light pleasantly? Certainly we defeat our object by so decorating the shade that it calls attention to itself. The firescreen, too, is surely to screen the fireless fireplace, not to call attention to the fact that there is a hole that for the time being has nothing in it.

This is not, however, a plea for monotony, but for the creation of a background, in which we and our activities are the important things and against which those things worth attention do not suffer unworthy competition. How much more effective are our pictures if we display them one or two at a time. The others can have their turn next month if they are worth it. Surely, too, the flower arrangement is all the better if its colours and forms do not and thinking simply. As with all designing we start off from the requirements, which for all houses are basically the same. We want a place to sit, for talking, for reading, for games or such relaxations as you prefer; a place to sleep, a place to eat, and a number of places to put things on or into. If a start is made at this point you will then need to decide just how you and your family like to do these things, for, after all, it is your home and it should suit you. Don't be led astray in your thoughts by what the Browns down the road have done; it may be very good and look fine, but it may not be what would suit you best. So, having decided just how you want to live in your house, consider what furniture is necessary to make it comfortable and convenient to live that way.

The simple scheme is best
In the selection of your furniture
are applied to cover or divert your attention from poor construction or poor material. As suggested before, the object to which you really want to draw attention, the picture or the bowl of roses from your garden, will be all the more effective if it is not subject to competition from unworthy, showy things. In chairs, settees and so on the simplest shapes are often the most comfortable and are certainly the most restful on the eye.

Be careful with upholstery coverings. Having satisfied yourself that they will not be unduly sensitive to slight soiling and that the materials will stand wear, you should then consider whether it is suitable in colour, pattern and texture. The texture should be pleasant to touch, not too slippery and it should harmonize with the other materials, curtains and carpet in the room.

For upholstery some pattern or colour texture is desirable, but it should not be too large or there is danger of visually destroying the shape of the piece of furniture, as is done by ‘dazzle’ camouflage painting. Again, let me urge that you aim, in decorating and furnishing, at the simple scheme, carried out as simply and straightforwardly as you can.

(To be continued)

COLOUR IN THE HOME will be discussed in the next issue.

IF THOSE EYES COULD ONLY SEE . . .

John O’Shea

How depressing it is to find that I have been championing such a film as Saraband. Still, it was worth rescuing from the oblivion to which it had been consigned by a particular brand of misleading journalism that parades in New Zealand and elsewhere as film criticism. The particular qualities that made Saraband pleasing are too infrequently seen — and all too consistently damned by blind critics.

I can recall, for instance, the bowls of decisions which greeted Ruben Mamoulian’s Blood and Sand. Rita Hayworth was indeed ridiculously, if unintentionally, funny in a sequence when with heaving chest she seduced Tyrone Power by pretending she was a bull and he a matador. But Blood and Sand had qualities superior to Saraband. It was not only pleasant but exciting to look at. The individual pictures it contained — tableaux of formalised Spanish life with Tyrone Power posturing in a variety of colourful matador’s costumes — were visually complete, compensating for the creaking plot and musty characterization. More notable, however, was the way in which Mamoulian used colour to intensify the final, brilliant, sun-lit scenes of death and passionate despair in the bull-ring. I have never before or since (except perhaps in an unknown little documentary called Steel) seen colour better employed than in the concluding sequence of Blood and Sand. The film’s dated, poorly-acted story was suddenly lifted to tragic heights.

The impact of this sequence owed something to the colour composition of each shot but was, I think, principally due to editing. The nature of the film suddenly changed. Until then it had been, like Saraband, little more than a succession of pleasantly composed coloured pictures. In this final sequence, Blood and Sand shifted very noticeably to the exclusive visual methods of cinema. Colour lent emphasis to the special arrangement of the pictures.

The implications of my views are not, I trust, too elusive. I go to the movies to see pictures. If they are embellished by first-rate acting, appropriate sound (dialogue, music, natural sound) historical fidelity, an intelligent plot and all the other qualities the critics waste words on, so much the better. But as I go to see pictures my opinion of a film usually turns on the quality of the composition of its individual pictures and on the editing of them, the way in which they have been arranged in motion. The quality of the dialogue and the skill of the actors is primary on the stage. On the screen, the visual sensation is all-important. The cinema can, and occasionally does, liberate itself from its dependence on the drama and other arts by concentrating on its visual nature.

Let’s look at the manner in which John Huston’s recent film, We Were Strangers, ingeniously established its political atmosphere and framework by relying on pictures alone. The opening shot was of the Cuban Senate discussing a bill to prohibit, in the interests of civil peace and public order, the public assembly of more than three citizens. As Senators rose to record their affirmative votes, opulent complicity, aristocratic reluctance, liberal hesitancy and fear, and working class treachery were graphically indicated not solely by the expressive faces of the Senators but also by the angles from which their faces were photographed and the varying speed at which the camera moved from one face to another. The result of the Senate’s vote was immediately revealed by a straight cut to an open car driving slowly through the streets while two young men threw out handbills denouncing the Government. Crowds gather to read them. A policeman sees the car. It accelerates and, after an exchange of shots, gets away.

Meanwhile, mounted police are savagely swinging truncheons and sabres among the crowd that has gathered. Now the director, John Huston, has a good reason for showing these events at the beginning of his film. He wishes to gain certain effects and he does so by the way in which he arranges the pictures of the events. He has an overall design for his film and a special design for the events he records at its beginning.
Hence, while the car is driving slowly through the streets, its engine quietly throbbing, Huston has used mainly long and medium shots with some closer tracking shots. At the sight of the police, the sound track accentuates the roar of the accelerating motor and the sequence is thereafter filled with the sound of shots, horses’ hooves, the shrieks of the crowd. The visual tempo is also accelerated. Close shots of the car, close-ups of its driver and of the two men in the back trying to dodge police bullets are alternated with varied shots of the police and the frightened citizens who are being attacked. At the end of the sequence there is a dissolve to a long and sustained shot of a quiet scene in which some of the principal characters of the film are introduced.

But before the main plot gets under way, the director has already established by simple and brief visual methods his theme of political rebellion in an oppressive police State. The audience is now aware of the road along which the film will travel and is receptive to the details of plot which follow. An atmosphere of tense, nervous, calamitous conspiracy has been generated. The symbols of impending disaster that have been stated so economically in the true language of the cinema pervade the rest of the film.

There were grounds for criticizing We Were Strangers. But how impudent are critics who fail to see what is good and mislead the public by pointing out that back projection in this sequence wasn’t too good, that in another sequence the idea of digging through the grave was too grisly, that one of the cast gave a bad performance, or that when the revolutionaries did take over the government of Cuba they were just as bad as their predecessors. Interesting comment, no doubt, maybe even worth saying, but not of much value as film criticism.

I think that film criticism betrays both itself and the cinema when it ignores the good and makes easy game of what is obviously inferior in many films. Critics get into a habit of labelling films ‘William Whitebait’ of the New Statesmen, recently showed the inadequacy of such a method when he dismissed the film Force of Evil as just another American crime film and gave a passing nod to the smooth slickness of technique that was only to be expected, he said, from Hollywood. The delicate human relationships depicted, the poetic conception of unpromising material (the numbers racket), and the impressive acting and directing that gave Force of Evil such unusual force and subtlety were quite ignored. It is a pity that blinkers are all too easily drawn over the eyes of those more or less intelligent members of the public who bother to read film reviews.

For the upshot seems to be that when the intelligentsia visit the movies they take along preconceived opinions and are incapable of perceiving that within the established conventions of movie plots acceptable to the box office, many directors—especially in Hollywood—are obtaining greater freedom for themselves and are turning more and more to the exercise of their art. Give me the ‘splendours and miseries of the suburban circuit’ anytime! The Western, for instance, is such a staple diet of the mass audience that directors, especially John Ford, have felt free to rhapsodize cinematically on its established themes and have made such good films as Stagecoach, Blood On The Moon, Red River, My Darling Clementine.

In the milieu of crime and violence, what a number of films have recently been made that, by concentrating on the importance of their pictures, try to transcend the limits of their formulated themes. Occasionally, they succeed. Thieves’ Highway, for instance, or Naked City, Brute Force, Double Indemnity, Knock On Any Door, Cry Of The City, or Crisscross.

The latter film, Crisscross, barely deserves inclusion. In many ways it was a deplorably vicious, degenerate and sadistic film. It worked over the old themes of crime and violence with a relentless savagery and a good deal of pointless, Doublecross succeeded doublecross with such rapidity that in the end one couldn’t care less who got bashed and bludgeoned. At least the director seemed to realize this, for in his final scenes he left as grand a litter of corpses on the screen as ever strewed an Elizabethan stage.

Yet Crisscross had a few sequences of considerable merit, sequences that gained strong, almost overpowering effects from the juxtaposition of moving pictures. One of the sequences illustrates the way in which a director’s selection and arrangement of shots, and his timing of them, can be expressive in a functional, not merely a decorative or descriptive way.

In this sequence, the hero (played by Burt Lancaster) sees his wife (Yvonne de Carlo) in a seamy dance hall. He has been separated from her for some years. He sees her across a crowded dance floor. Oblivious of his presence, she is ‘giving’ herself to the frenzied rhythms of the dance band’s ‘Afro-Cuban’ number. The music gets louder, shriller, more frantic as the sequence progresses. Shots of the band and the soloists are interspersed with shots of Lancaster watching his wife dancing. Long shots of Lancaster and his wife give way to mid-shots, then closer and close-up shots as the sequence reaches a climax of passionate, tense frustration. No words are spoken and neither Lancaster nor Yvonne de Carlo have to ‘act’ during the sequence. Yet the inner currents of their earlier life together, their emotions and characters are conveyed with precision and economy. The hero is tired, drifting, aimless; he still languishes with love for his fickle wife. His loneliness and melancholy at seeing her is underlined by the shoddy, artificial gaiety of the dance hall and the brittle yet animal voluptuousness of his wife.

Both in this sequence and in the one from We Were Strangers, meaning is conveyed by visual methods with sound intensifying its impact. In both of them, pictures tell the story. It seems to me that every time a film tries, if only in part, to tell its story either by attending to visual composition, to the movement and grouping within each picture, or by its editing, its arrangement of selected pictures, it is taking one small step towards defining a specific idiom of the cinema; and the cinema draws a little nearer to finding its own particular style of perceiving and illuminating subject matter which it shares with other arts.
It is obvious in the water colour painting above that the artist, Miss Sina Woolcott, has passed the stage of her development where technique was a problem. This enables her to concentrate on the creative side of her craft and develop the vision which lifts painting above the average or the ordinary. Miss Woolcott must have worked hard and often to get so far and it is pleasing to see that her talent has been rewarded. She has been awarded the 1950 National Travelling Scholarship in Art by the Association of New Zealand Art Societies. This Scholarship enables her to study abroad for two years. The grant is £1000 and a representative from each Art Society throughout New Zealand is selected to act as one of the judges. Miss Woolcott was finally chosen from the eighteen entrants to the competition. At some future date we hope to reproduce some examples of her painting done while she is abroad.
The use of large windows increasing in size until the whole wall became a window as in this house is characteristic of modern architecture. In this example the architect has integrated with skill this glass wall into the fabric of the house.

A PICTORIAL SURVEY OF HOUSING IN NEW ZEALAND

CONCLUSION

As in most countries the contemporary New Zealand house is eclectic. The overseas architectural and home and garden magazines, which have a big influence upon the design of the New Zealand house, not only show the most interesting and exciting work of such internationally known architects as Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier and Gropius, but a great variety of work which in most cases can only be regarded as whimsy. The photographs are typical examples of the contemporary architect-designed houses. These houses have all one thing in common: they are all different; different shapes in roofs, windows, doors and wall coverings. They have all been designed that way because society likes its houses so. Each house is an interesting piece of personal expression, but without regard for its neighbours or neighbourhood, resulting in a heterogeneous collection of houses each intent upon impressing the passer-by with the wealth or good taste of the owner and ability of the architect.

In fact the architect designs few houses; the great bulk of houses are erected without his skilled directions. Then this demand, to be different, is expressed in whimsy and trivialities in the design of the houses which are on small individual pieces of land.

Thus all houses are different, but all streets; all suburbs, are the same, resulting in a visual monotony which is deadening. The ideal, it would seem, is a house standing in a large garden, free but different from its neighbours, and with several servants to take care of the house and family. This is, of course, beyond practically all as a reality. In place of this ideal a miniature house is built on a miniature section. This miniature stands free if only by a few feet, has front and back doors and entrance halls, has numerous small rooms all carefully partitioned, all opening off passages. These houses, usually without modern mechanical appliances, are costly, often draughty and cold, and there are never enough of them to go round. Some of the reasons for the lack of houses can be explained by the system and standard of construction. It is agreed
that high wages and short hours can only be maintained in industry by systems of high repetitive production, but it is difficult to build this type of house by such a system. Housing in New Zealand has made some progress towards repetitive production, but is in the main still a craft industry.

There have been many attempts to introduce improved and cheaper methods of house building, all with little to show, because the house asked for is the miniature house based upon the ideals of another day. It is a house that belongs to the craft system of construction. The craft system can only meet the universal demand for houses by the working of long hours. But the hours of work today are short. There is a place in the houses of the wealthy and in the houses partly built by the owner, for craft construction and the individual design by the architect. It would seem that greater encouragement and direction should be given to those who, in their spare time, are able and wish to erect their own houses.

As towns grow larger the size of sections grows smaller; as wealth becomes more equally distributed the problem of designing one house becomes the problem of all houses. The great change that this must have upon the design of the individual living unit is now being realized. Architectural design will not be concentrated upon the isolated house, but upon the whole design problem of housing for the many. Instead of designing one house to be built once, the problem is the designing of one house to be used many times. The design of streets, and the services for streets such as light standards and bus-shelters, plenty of large and small trees, the contrasting of groups of houses, the grouping of large groups against small, low masses against tall, and the use of colour. All this is mostly neglected, but it is upon such work that the architect should be employing his skill and knowledge.

Providing economically sufficient houses in this country is not in the first case technical, but social and aesthetic. If society will accept houses planned for the individual family based upon the social customs and production of today, not yesterday, then the overcoming of the housing shortage will be nearer of attainment.

### Plans

1. This house has been designed for the family as a unit without strain for excessive privacy. It is less inhibited by the conventions and habits of bygone days than plan Number 2. There is only one entrance door but casement doors open out into the garden. Architect: A. L. Gabites.

2. "Has front and back doors and entrance hall, has numerous small rooms all carefully partitioned and opening off passages." These plans are all to same scale but note the miniature character of the plan compared with plans Numbers 1 and 3. Architect unknown.

3. This is an open plan but provides privacy to each member of the family when required. There are no passages and the minimum number of partitions. The floor area is 125 square feet less than plan Number 2, but has a spaciousness which is wholly lacking in that plan. Architect: Edward Stone.
This is a more conventional use of window and bearing wall, but has been illustrated because of the pleasant relation between house, terrace and garden. Architect: G. I. Hole.

This house, erected some years ago, is derivative of the English cottage with its small windows and dominating tile roof. Architect: P. H. Graham. Photographer: Hall Raine.

"All houses are different but all streets and suburbs are the same, resulting in a visual monotony which is deadening."

This house is different but of the four examples shown is the only one which traces and develops the characteristics that have persisted through the first hundred years of the New Zealand house. Architects: Vernon Brown & Simpson. Photographer: Frank Hofmann.
FAMILY: Husband and wife—two children, boy and girl.
SITE: Large section, three-quarter acre, below road, well planted in shrubs and trees with half acre of native bush. Magnificent view over harbour. Sheltered from both North and South winds.
PLAN: Finances dictated the house be as small as reasonable. The plan was opened up as much as possible, e.g. screen partition only to main bedroom, and large servery opening to kitchen. Area, excluding basement laundry and workshop, 850 square feet. Living room 29 feet x 15 feet.
PLACING of kitchen sink, looking over dining area and out through large windows, dispels any idea that the kitchen is small. Kitchen has proved exceptionally easy to run.

In winter the large area is quite easy to warm, and because there are no cold areas adjoining a very hot one, there is a noticeable lack of draughts.

The bedroom being in the same area as the living room is quite comfortable in winter and tests showed only a drop of 5 to 6 degrees F. from one end of the house to the other.

The light kahikatea panels to the bedroom scheme afford a pleasant break to the remainder of the finish.

EXTERIOR FINISH: White concrete base and stained weatherboards.

The photograph on the cover is another interior view.
TOP: A Memorial to New Zealand soldiers in the style of ancient Greece and faced with English stone. ABOVE: Stone facing used in imitation of structural stonework. RIGHT: Plaster finish on concrete, but treated as a veneer with no pretence of being a structural material.
BUILDING WITH NEW ZEALAND MATERIALS

Charles Feeney

Almost inevitably any article on early New Zealand architecture points out the good use made of local materials by the pioneers, even to the extent of bedding river stones in clay and painting them up with lime made by burning seashells. After a short time both designs and materials were imported in an attempt to introduce 'culture', until we have gone so far from the fundamental good design of the early settlers as to have a building in one city as a memorial to New Zealand soldiers in the style of ancient Greece, and faced with English stone.

With the materials native to this country there should be no need for a self-conscious development of a 'New Zealand style of architecture'. Materials, climate, social and economic conditions together with geological and regional differences should form a basis from which a type of architecture would naturally evolve.

Churches show misuse of material
A most outstanding example of the misuse of an excellent building material by the imitation of an out-dated building form from another country can be seen in the churches of almost every town. Wooden Gothic! An analysis of the meaning behind genuine Gothic architecture must make us realize that this is only less foolish than the reinforced Gothic of our larger city churches. Other countries much older than ours have shown that a building can be contemporary in spirit and yet have all the essentials of church architecture. An analysis of the requirements of a church in New Zealand might show that they differed little from those in other countries, but an analysis of available materials and techniques would show that a living design could be created which, once we accepted that a church need not be designed in the spirit of the middle ages, would become a wellcome addition to our environment.

Timber will probably always be a main building material for smaller buildings, and intelligently used can be one of the most attractive. But timber buildings in the style of another country and another age can never fulfil the requirements of building in New Zealand today. The houses of the period before 1914, with wooden Corinthian porticoes, imitation stonework and tall narrow windows with arched heads as if built with stone or brick are an extreme case. But they are less inappropriate than many other examples of 'Imported Culture' that we see built at the present. Even the beautiful photography of the American magazines cause many architects a headache when the client, or more often his wife, brings out an example of an attractive house on a large Californian or Arizona estate and asks that it be reproduced on a suburban eighth of an acre. Imported designs in substitute materials can only be a caricature of the original.

Our Corrugated Iron Curtain
A recent article on New Zealand in an English magazine was entitled 'Behind New Zealand's Corrugated Iron Curtain'. An amusing title and an amusing article, but rather disturbing to the serious student of New Zealand architecture. In contrast to this, some temporary shops in bomb-damaged Coventry, built of timber and sheeted with asbestos cement—a material we produce here—were illustrated in many architectural magazines as examples of first-rate design. We could make our temporary buildings equally attractive if we tried, and be known for our good design instead of being a source of amusement on account of our traditional misuse of materials.

Concrete is a natural material owing to our many shingle bedded rivers, our lime and coal deposits and our need for an earthquake resistant building. When concrete is used as such, and not as a cheap imitation of stone, we see fine examples of architecture such as Wellington's Dixon Street Flats, the Auckland Glass Co.'s building and one or two office buildings in different towns. We appear to have overcome the phase of jointing lines on plaster, but we still place large columns at the entrance of our buildings, spanned by a concrete or steel beam, but spaced in deference to classical tradition based on the fact that a stone lintel had a limited span. Surface treatment of concrete has been little explored but much could be done other than the usual smooth or plastered texture to which we limit ourselves. Textured finishes, exposed aggregate and various types of precast panels could give endless variety.

Concrete is often used as the structural material with a finishing veneer, which can be supplied by one of several stones quarried locally. But surely we can avoid the habit of tending to make such panels look structural. Applied and treated as a veneer a lightness of effect is possible that cannot be obtained otherwise, while the variation in surface texture is infinite so long as we use structural and finishing materials each on their merits.

Clay
Clay building products could well be used in a wider variety. Roofing tiles have unfortunately been regarded as the best material for covering a house regardless of the nature of the general structure. As a result thousands of light timber buildings groan and distort under the weight of a heavy tiled roof. Structural brickwork will never be popular in an earthquake district, but brick has many non-structural uses. Many new forms of clay tiles could be evolved for paving and finishing.

With these and their local materials used in preference to imported ones, and used honestly, we can build, furnish and decorate in a manner that will enable us to rank architecturally with any country in the world. But will we?
The importation and marketing of records of serious music in New Zealand is a curious and interesting business. Potentially, there is a very large sale for serious recordings but the distributing agents do not advertise their wares, and at the moment, no publicity—in print at any rate—is given to such records except through dealers’ lists. A substantial printed catalogue of local issues is in existence. But owing mainly to import restrictions (a point I shall elaborate further on) over here and, to a slight extent, production difficulties in Australia where the discs are normally processed, it has become a quite unreliable guide to what is actually available. Against this, there are fairly regular arrivals of imported English recordings which are nominally additions to the local catalogue, but unless you know a friendly dealer who will give ample warning of the arrival of new releases, you will very likely miss some good issues, since once the original stocks are sold there is little hope of getting replacements.

Gone are the days when you could walk into a record shop serene in the knowledge that any record listed in the local catalogue could be, either obtained from stock or got from the warehouse within a day or so. During recent years demand for records of good music has exceeded supply, and in a country like New Zealand on the outside edge of the world, this is a serious matter. There are still some people, of course, who cherish a prejudice against recorded music, but it is undeniable that without recordings important categories of music could never be heard here. We have a National Orchestra certainly, but any devotee of orchestral music could name dozens of works which our orchestra, for sheer lack of numbers, is not yet able to play. Chamber music is slightly more accessible, but there is still not enough of it to satisfy the serious listener; as for opera and choral music, the point does not need labouring.

In the early 1930’s the doom of the gramophone was confidently prophesied. Radio was invading every home. Who was going to spend precious money on records or radiograms when the best records could be heard well-reproduced from a broadcasting station? Sales of records dropped considerably in those days, and it was only the more strong-minded music lover who realized that even the best radio set with a wide coverage of stations was no true substitute for a well-chosen, personal record collection. The turning-point came just before the war, with the introduction of a detached turntable which could be plugged into any radio set. It was now possible to have electrical reproduction of one’s own recordings without the heavy expense of a full-scale radiogram. From that time on, sales of classical records began to rise, and the rapidly increasing scope of the gramophone catalogue gave promise of a golden age to come. Better and cheaper reproduction increased demand, and recording companies added quickly to their lists of works. But in 1938, the very year when the tide of demand began to turn, the importation of records was restricted. And unfortunately for us the annual supply of records remains, to this day, bittened down to 1938 values.

All this, it must be remembered, went on without any kind of advertising or publicity for records (for why should importers advertise what they can’t get?); and here we are with an immense appetite fed with only the most meagre rations. Unless people are in regular touch with their dealers they have little chance of knowing what new records are being issued. It is quite mistaken to suppose that any attractive recording heard on the radio can subsequently be bought at your local shop.

The actual technique of recording has been improving by leaps and bounds. Around 1926 we were startled by the first successful records made by the electrical process; and truly amazing they were, compared with the results from the old acoustic method. The next advance, roughly a decade later, came with the introduction of what was known as the dynamic microphone—an innovation which coincided with the great slump in record sales of the mid-thirties, and so passed unnoticed except by enthusiasts. There was a further advance, which may conveniently be dated from the end of the war, when even more

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startling progress towards realism was made by recordings of extended frequency. All these improvements were accompanied by the advent of light-weight pickups, improved speaker units, and a flood of records made under the improved process.

Now from America comes news of the next great innovation in recorded music—the production of long-playing 'microgroove' discs which contain almost half an hour's music on a single 12in. side. The capacity of these new recordings (playing at 33 1/3 revolutions a minute as against the present standard of 78) can best be gauged by the fact that American buyers, with the proper equipment to play the wonder records, can now hear the whole of La Bohème on two 12in. discs, and the whole of the Bach B minor Mass on three! Furthermore these discs are practically unbreakable, being made of plastic.

There are murmurs of the introduction to the New Zealand market of playing units adjustable to the low speed for microgroove discs, so that the wise buyer will eventually be able to play his normal records as well as the new long-playing ones when they become available. But I should emphasize that there is so far no indication that we will get such records here in the near future. (At the moment of writing, they have not yet been marketed in Great Britain.)

These random notes on records and reproduction are an introduction to a regular page of criticism which will appear in Design Review. I propose to review more interesting records of serious music as they become available in New Zealand. But although it may be tantalizing I think we should also look at a few of the best recordings which aren't released here, recordings such as the new French Tales of Hoffman, for example.

I am aware that criticism of this kind is, of necessity, personal; it would be pointless and insipid if it were otherwise. And I am aware that 'the only part of music that really matters is the part that you cannot write about'. But if we take the quality of the music for granted, and look into the quality of reproduction and the standard of performance, I think these short notes will at least have the virtue of publishing a little of what is being recorded and examining how it is being done.

The most appealing vocal record I have heard for some time might easily be overlooked because of the unfamiliarity of titles and artist. It is a small HMV disc, number DA
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1913, and contains El miror de la maja, by Granados, and Hablame de Amores, by Fusté, sung by a soprano with the fine-sounding name of Victoria de los Angeles. This singer appears to be the only serious Spanish artist to become known internationally since the establishment of Franco's Government. She has broadcast for the BBC and recently made one guest appearance at Covent Garden as Mimi in La Bohème. As to her excellence there will be no two opinions, and her supremely musicianly singing of two haunting songs is allied to a most glorious voice. Gerald Moore, sounding as though he had played nothing but Spanish music all his life, accompanies her. The only other Los Angeles record available here at the moment is of two dramatic arias from Falla's opera, La Vida Breve (HMV DB 6702). This is on a much larger scale and seems to me to establish her as a great singer. The music is of memorable beauty.

A new recording of Mozart's last and perhaps greatest symphony (that in C major, K.551, generally called 'the Jupiter') has arrived to join the existing versions by Bruno Walter and Sir Thomas Beecham. The latest set is in the 'plum label' HMV category and is thus cheaper in price than the other two. The performance by the Vienna Philharmonic under Karl Bohm is a good one, which comes to life after a slightly disappointing first movement. The symphony goes comfortably on to seven sides—the last side has an unusually deliberate rendering of the Impresario overture. If you want a good average performance you should be well satisfied with this; but if you want the best, even though it costs more, you should try to hear the Bruno Walter recording, made just before the war with the same orchestra. It may seem heresy to say so, but Sir Thomas Beecham's version of this symphony is dull as a recording and even, in some respects, as a performance. Numbers of the new Bohm set are HMV C7759/62 (automatic sequence only).
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The Studio 'How-to-do-it' need no introduction. Making a Bookplate, the thirty-ninth, is a worthy addition to the series. The publishers have been careful to select an eminent craftsman to deal with each subject and the results have been admirable. Mark Severin, the author in this case, knows all about bookplates, their purpose, their history, their fascination — and he knows all about making them. The text is clearly and simply written and teems with practical suggestions and sound advice.

There seems to be endless variety in the hundreds of examples illustrated in the book but Mr Severin assures us that these can be classified into three categories: Calligraphy, Typography, Heraldry or Subject. Within this field the scope is practically unlimited. The only limitations are, in fact, those of the medium chosen for reproducing the design. Of the possible methods Mr Severin gives pride of place to wood engraving, with line engraving next. Lithography, etching, drypoint, mezzotint and fine heliogravure are all "smart media". Offset-litho, line blocks or half-tones are unworthy.

There is an illuminating chapter on execution, wherein the author tackles the delicate problem of producing a good design that will please the customer. A bookplate is such a personal thing that the designer (for preference a graphic artist) must be prepared to incorporate the view of the person who wants an ex libris. Tact plays an important part.

This is a book that will appeal to designers and laymen alike. S. B. Maclean

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By Lancelot Hogben—Max Parris & Co. Ltd., London.

The title suggests a popular approach and the book is in fact a very readable and entertaining history of art. Many illustrations from a great variety of sources enliven the 280 pages. Lancelot Hogben is frankly a "popular expositor," but his book, which could easily be perfectly hateful, is in fact thoroughly fascinating. Art is regarded as a means of communication and the topics include sex, seals, signatures, alphabets, printing, paper, playing cards, stereotype and isotype, anatomy, advertisement, television, animation and free speech. The text is chatty and covers incidentally a host of facts and some interesting opinions. The 200 odd illustrations were chosen by Marie Neurath, Director of the Isotype Institute, and she knows how to make a picture book.
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