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Summary

Supplementary Remarks

Jürgen Joedicke

The Architect's Task Possibilities and tendencies

(Page 419)

Of the three great architects who laid the foundation of modern architecture and who had a major influence during the last three decades, not one is still with us: following Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe has died. The architectural science has become all the more poorer. But the passing of the three great masters, as they were often called, marked merely the end of a development which has long been progressing.

Towards the end of the fifties, signs could no longer be overlooked that the exemplification of the architectural design inherited and mainly influenced by these architects has lost its fascination for younger architects. The first revolt occurred, however, in only the aesthetic field and became bogged down, at least in parts, in formalism.

A second and for the future perhaps more significant effort began to make itself apparent during the first half of the sixties. It is difficult to describe when one attempts to indicate its full complexity. It is relatively easy to characterize when one makes use of popular expressions: for the demands of "scientification of architecture" or the definition of the architect as an "environmental planner" or "social lawyer" are nothing more than pipe dreams which can often be met with in architecture. The distorted relationship of the architect to reality is characterized by the criticism of everything previously created which accompanies these requirements. Behind this radical self amputation hides the uncertainty of their calling, which in the past stated that creativity could not be valued enough; but consistently failed to prove the worth of its own doing.

The uncertainty as to the further development of our profession is mirrored in the study of architecture. Reforms are generally taken to be necessary: what is lacking, however, are the objectives which without reforms are nothing but compromises.

Characteristic of the present situation is the ideological cementation of the point of view. The requirement for scientification of architecture is compared with the ideal of the creative architects. The question itself as to how a present work of architecture can be recognized as being a work of art illustrates how problematic this way of thinking is. Whether present day buildings are works of art or not should be left to the judgement of later generations. And yet creative capabilities must be confirmed by a commission for any architect desiring membership to the architectural board of Baden-Württemberg.

Social criticism has blamed the architect that he confronts problems with a design. One can also formulate this criticism in another way: the architect builds the programme into his design more or less without reflecting the former.

If it is true that disruptions in our building environment can be traced back to this way of thinking, then an extension of the professional sphere of the architect into the planning phase preceding the design is required. It could be that a development of this kind, the necessity of which is indicated by the fact that decisions are made in the programming phase which vitally affect the design; i.e. that such a development leads to a specialization of certain tasks of the architect, as is already present in practice for certain tasks during the phase of realization.

In a positive sense, specialization means an extension of knowledge within a limited field; negatively, specialization means loss of relationship. When such a tendency is bound to happen in our field of activity, the conventional structure of the cooperation in the architect's office must be altered. Here, two things are necessary: architects who think themselves to be universally educated must be replaced by specialized architects, and secondly, the hierarchical arrangement of the conventional office must give way to a cooperative relationship. Indications of this are already present. Experience will show whether the architect is able to apply necessary new structures correctly, that is with common sense.

Our masters had it easier. For them, architecture was a creative matter, which like getting children required only one man, to use a bonmot of Frank Lloyd Wright. Only Walter Gropius stepped out of line. He attempted to try out new forms of cooperation.

These changes not only affect the administration but also the mode of working of the architect. Scientification of architecture is in itself impossible. What is possible, however, and also necessary is the introduction and use of scientific methods in the accessible regions of planning.

As is with other branches of learning, it is important here to adopt a mode of action, to search for methods in which the planning procedure itself becomes the scientific object. The objective is to derive procedural structures which are problem orientated.

This is where the opinions divert. Some hold the trial and error method for sufficient, others hold cooperation and co-ordination possible by means of formalized planning methods only. The apparent contrast soon disappears, however, once one analyses actual building tasks. As long as the required information can be handled by a single person, conventional administrative practice and methods are sufficient. As soon as the complexity of the task and the means call for the cooperation of a group, methods must be developed and put to use which must be based on proven fundamentals and which show a relationship between the contribution of the individual and the meaning of the whole. What is meant here, was reasoned in more detail in the papers on the theme of building research in the issues 9/69 and 10/69.

Incentives to change the working methods will be triggered by the increasing industrialization of the building methods. The argumentation for the use of industrially manufactured building elements has, until now, been based on the economical side of the matter, although significant improvements were more the exception than the rule due to the small series. However, it is probable that the industrialization of the building methods will be accelerated due to social reasons. The number of those taking up employment in the building trade is falling consistently, since many have taken to factory employment. The building capacity in Germany could be achieved only with the help of imported labour. As soon as the foreign economy is improved, this labour will return to where they came from. The industrial

fabrication of building elements is then a possible solution to maintain the building capacity or improve this figure.

If this assumption is correct, this will have an effect on the work of the architect. Total prefabrication—and not merely the prefabrication of individual elements—of the complete building as a result of industrially manufactured building elements sets a completely different planning procedure as prerequisite.

Quite probably, it is from this aspect that the necessity to use formalizable planning methods will materialize.

1. Jürgen Joedicke, The Formalization of the Planning Process.
2. Horst Höfler, Lutz Kandel, The Development of Methods of Evaluation.

Actuality

The World's largest Telescope

Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, Chicago

Robert R. McMath Solar Telescope Kitt Peak, Arizona

(Pages 449-451)

Conventional measures fail in the description of this building. It has the appearance of a gigantic plastic art like the embodiment of the notion "anti-architecture". Behind this abstract form, however, hides the largest solar telescope in the world. This building is an example of the problems which confront the architect when building unconventional objects of research. The telescope is used for research of the solar atmosphere: enabling pressure, temperature, density and magnetic field as well as the chemical conditions of the sun to be analysed. The structure consists of a reinforced concrete tower made up of individual pipes having a section of 91 cm (35.82 in.). The solar mirror rests on these pipes. The angled shaft is 2/3rds buried, approx. 61 m (200 ft.) protrudes from the earth and is stabilized at the upper end by the concrete tower.

Actuality

The Museum as a Symbol

Arieh Sharon, Eldar Sharon
Eng.: N. Vardimon

Museum Kibbutz Yad Mordechai

(Pages 452-454)

The building configuration results from the interlacing of rooms on different planes. The rooms are grouped around a hall which forms the centre of the system. Visitors are led around a circular course. The end of each exhibition surface is lit by a window which breaks through the closed exterior wall.

From the entry, annexed by small rooms, the visitor reaches the central exhibition hall via a platform. The hall forms the beginning and end of the sequence of exhibition rooms.