

architettura w
ambiente

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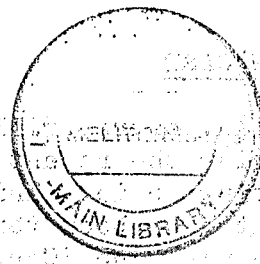
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editorial.

THE DIE IS (M)CAST

That the B.E.&A. course will form part of the New University was confirmed during the recent 'public information' programmes on the broadcasting media. This institution will be expected to cater for what have been termed as 'utilitarian' courses and ours seems to have made the 'Gang'.

We earnestly hope that facilities that we presently enjoy at the Old University will also be provided for, and hopefully also improved in the long run, at the New University. That a certain 'uneasiness' exists amongst the majority of students to 'CROSS-OVER' to the New University is definitely not due to any capricious motive. Our students (i.e. students in the B.E.&A. course) happen to know how both Institutions are presently run, having to attend lectures at both the Old and New Universities, and can tell the innumerable differences that exist between the two.

* Library facilities would be a priority in the list. With the advent of so many new courses at the New University something drastic has to be implemented to improve the existing library conditions (inclusive of space, hours and books).

* If the present 'patched up' staff at the Civil Engineering Department is anything to go by for the future as far as teaching staff is concerned, then we are in for a lean period indeed! Presently we have a three men staff, two of the lecturers being 'on loan' from other state schools and the other still performs under the title of 'assistant lecturer'!!

The latter argument brings us to a crucial point. With the B.E.&A. course at the New University, it remains to be seen whether the administration shall be securely tied to the apron strings of the Department of Education and hence subject to the stifling bureaucracy which reigns supreme at the New University to this very day. Why? Because as the Director put it in his most paternalistic manner, the New University shall be like an inexperienced growing lad who, for his own good cannot be left alone! This can be very damaging - there is nothing like bureaucracy to kill off both students' and staff initiative, and reduce work of the course to 'chalk and talk' sessions. A University lacking initiative from its main components, i.e. students and staff, is very much a dead organ in any educational system. A dead University means a totally hopeless Tertiary Education!

From these pages we have already expressed our belief that students in the B.E.&A. course would benefit from an integrated system of academic and related practical work and there is no scope of going over the same ground all over again. That students and staff are surrounded by an aura of concern is a direct consequence of their genuine and honest interest in the future of local tertiary education. Being our last editorial for this academic year, we leave our readers, hoping that come the next, the situation would be 'normal', making it possible for one and all to complete the course to which he had initially enrolled. We will also be able to welcome the first group of student/workers to the B.E.&A. course in the history of local education!!

We wish all students good luck in the forthcoming results.

buildings

of to-day.

LA MURALLA ROJA - SPAIN

Introduction

Some time ago it was reported in one of the local papers that the Spanish Government was sending over the well-known architect Bofill to advise the Maltese authorities regarding the recycling of the buildings soon to be vacated by the British services. Assuming that this architect is Ricardo Bofill, I decided to select one of his works for this issue's "building of today". My choice fell on a complex of apartment buildings in the tourist development of La Manzanera in Calpe, Alicante, Spain, better known as "La Muralla Roja" (The Red Wall).

The Taller de Arquitectura

However, before investigating this building further it is worthwhile giving some more information about its creator - Ricardo Bofill and his Taller de Arquitectura. Ricardo, the son of Emilio Bofill, an architect and builder himself, set up the Taller de Arquitectura in Barcelona in 1963, when he was 24 years of age. The Taller is a multidisciplinary team which, during its fifteen years of existence, has produced some of the most exciting architecture of modern times. They imbue their work with a strong element of fun and symbolism which had long been missing from architecture, having been banished by the somewhat soul-destroying, exclusively functional, doctrine of the International Style. This they do without sacrificing economy, as the large number of executed projects prove. In fact the Taller's approach to their work is inclusive rather than exclusive, and each project must meet the high functional, structural, environmental, aesthetic, symbolic, economic and social criteria they set themselves.

The Taller team is as varied and as colourful as their work. Principally it embraces Ricardo Bofill and his sister Anna, a 34 year old Doctor of Architecture and keen mathematician who also composes mathematical music; Peter Hodgkinson, 38

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We wish all students good luck in the forthcoming results.

The Editor

However, before investigating this building further it is worth while to note some more information about the center - Ricardo Botilla was the father of Augustus Ricardo, the son of Emilia Botilla, an excellent and brilliant himself, son of the father of Augustus Ricardo in 1905, when he was 24 years of age. The father is a well-to-do family man which during the fifteen years of existence, has produced some of the most exciting architecture of modern times. They have their work with a strong element of the modernism which had long been missing from architecture, having been brushed by the modernist soul - working, relatively functional, but - one trend of the international style. This they do without any artistic compromise, as the large number of executed projects prove. In fact the father's approach to their work is totally five meters than exclusive, and each project must meet the high functional, technical, economic, aesthetic, symbolic, and social requirements of the modernist architecture.

buildings

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BY JIM GALEA

LA MURALLA ROJA - SPAIN

Introduction

Some time ago it was reported in one of the local papers that the Spanish Government was sending over the well-known architect Bofill to advise the Maltese authorities regarding the recycling of the buildings soon to be vacated by the British services. Assuming that this architect is Ricardo Bofill, I decided to select one of his works for this issue's "building of today". My choice fell on a complex of apartment buildings in the tourist development of La Manzanera in Calpe, Alicante, Spain, better known as "La Muralla Roja" (The Red Wall).

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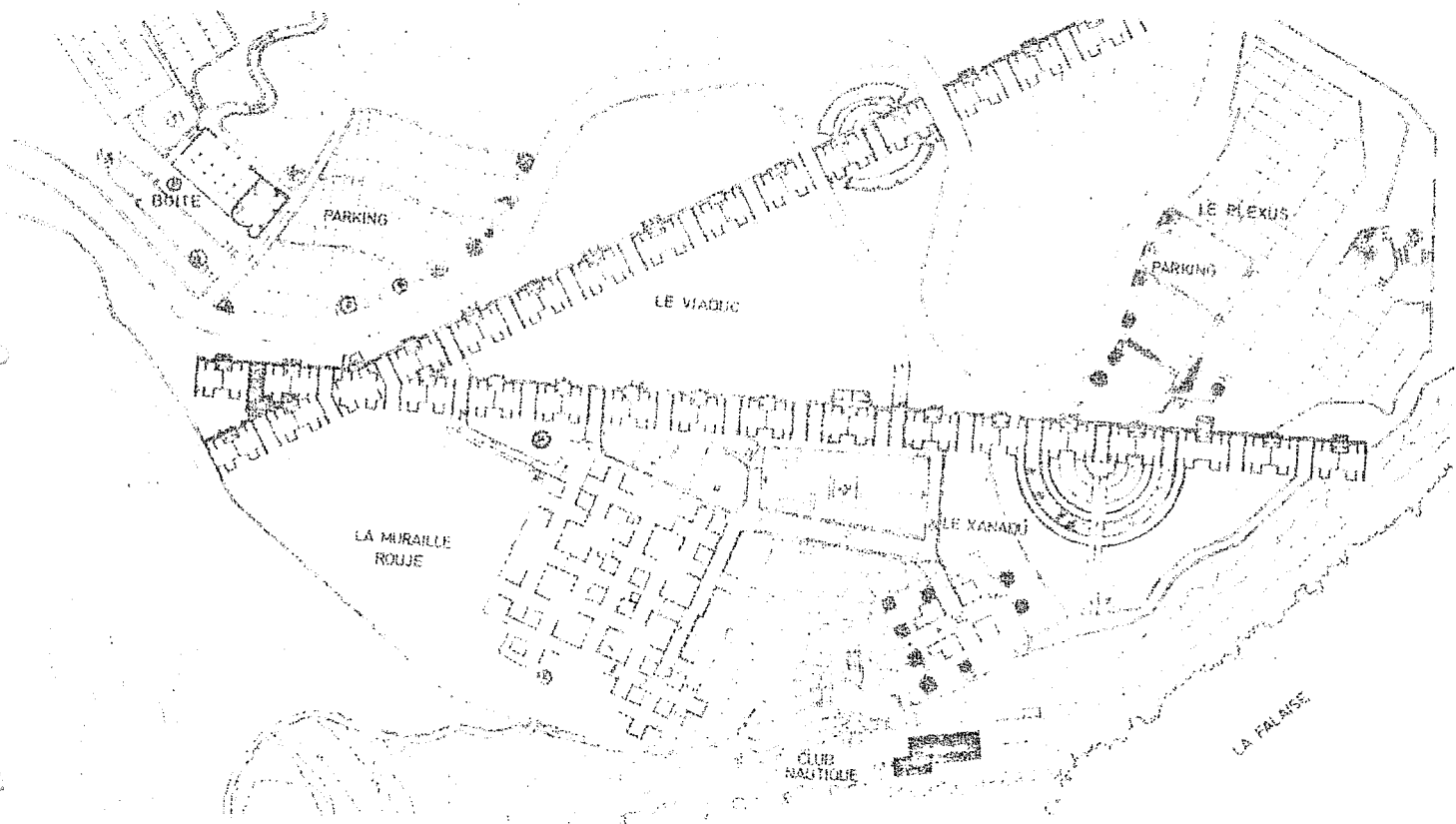
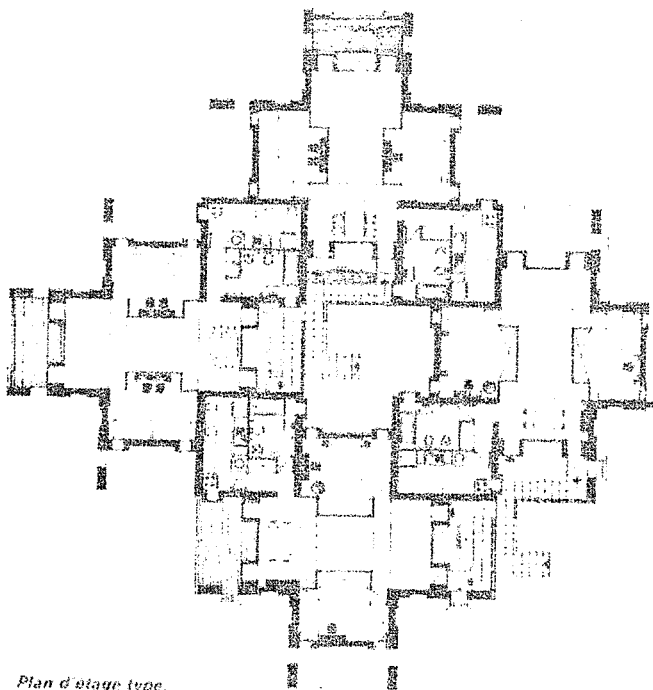


Fig. 1.



Plan d'étage type.

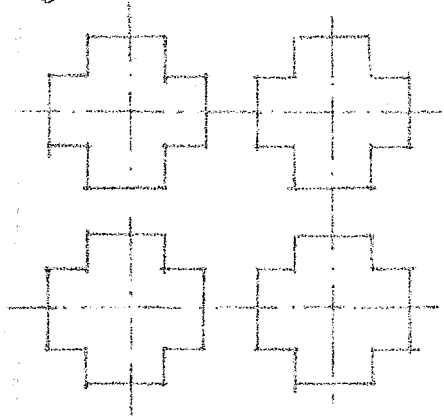
Fig. 2.

BUILDINGS OF TODAY

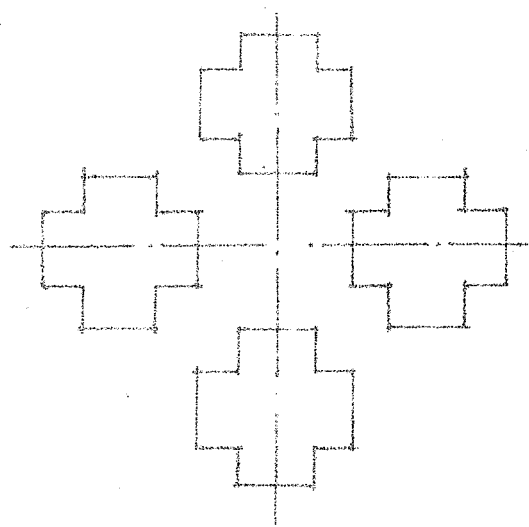
LA MIRALLA ROJA

~ SPAIN

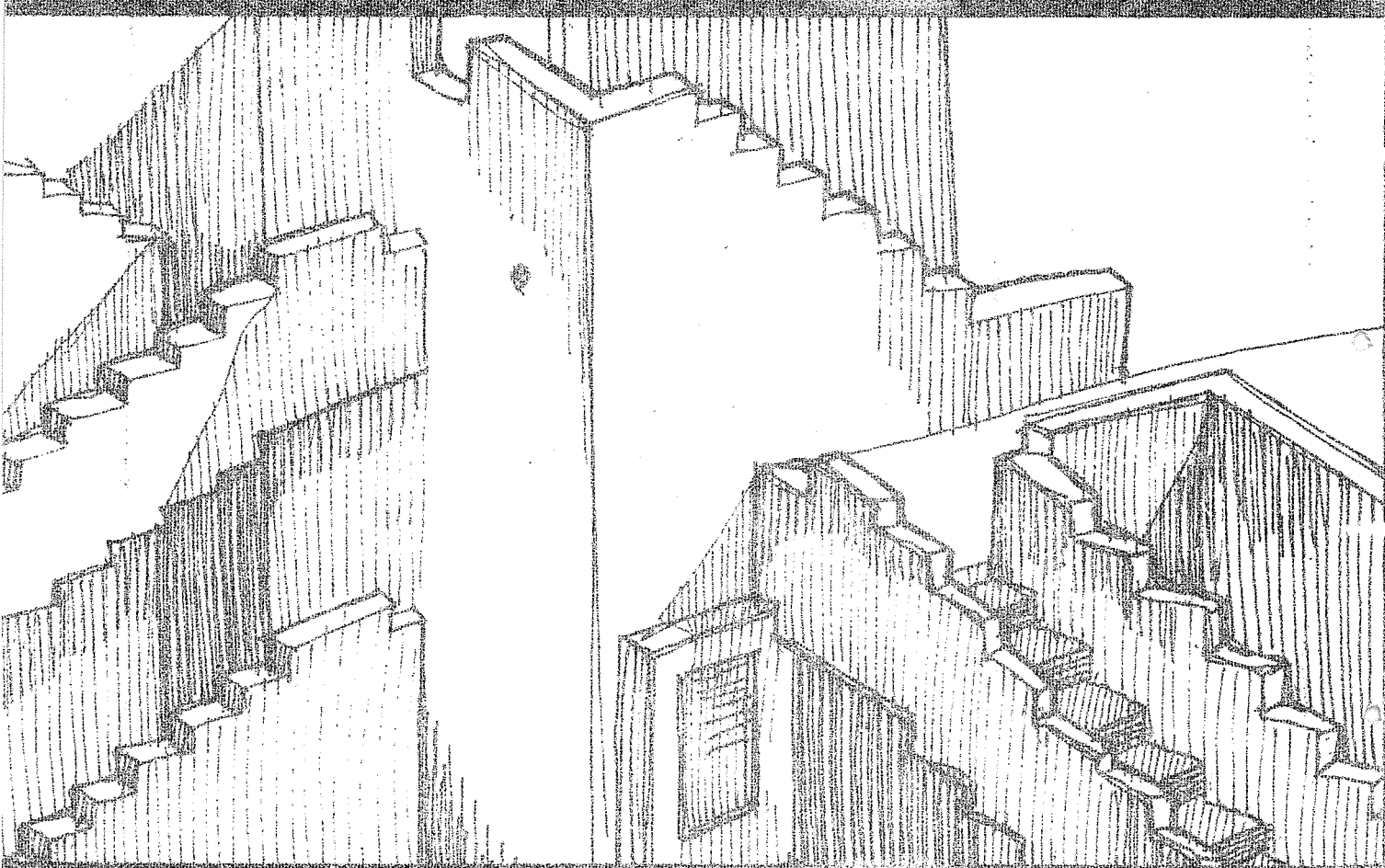
Clustering Possibilities



SQUARE FORMATION



GREEK CROSS FORMATION



years, a British architect trained at the Architectural Association, who was also a musician with one of Spain's leading rock groups; Romano Collado, a 32 year old engineer; Salvador Clotas, a 40 year old literary critic; economist Julio Romeo; Manolo Munez a 36 year old stage producer and finally the eldest member of the team, the 50 year old poet José-Augustin Goytisolo. Each member of the team makes his/her special contribution to the project in hand; each has a specific role to play although these roles are by no means fixed or stereotyped. A discussion of the philosophy and method of working of this formidable team, although fascinating is, however, beyond the scope of this article. And so, back to The Wall!

La Muralla Roja

La Muralla Roja was built in 1969-1975 as part of the touristic complex of La Manzanera, on a rocky and rough coastal areas dominated by the Penon de Ifach, a Gibraltar-like rock, across a stretch of water. La Manzanera contains other characteristically named projects by the Taller, such as the vernacular inspired Plexus villa-apartments, the Xanadu block emulating in outline the Penon across the sea, and the incredible, intersecting viaduct apartment blocks, Roman I. (See site plan figure 1).

Within its total built surface area of $3650m^2$ the Red Wall contains a variety of apartment sizes: one-roomed studio flats $60m^2$ in area; $80m^2$ two-roomed apartments and $120m^2$ three-roomed flats, all of which may be subdivided and combined as the users desire. On the roof are solariums and a swimming pool while the roofs of the lower blocks are used as "promenade terraces". The ground floor also contains a restaurant, a sauna and shops.

Plan

The overall plan is based on a strict geometric system and consists of a permutation of apartments arranged within a system of Greek crosses. Each Greek cross has in its centre the main living space which may extend, according to the size of the apartment, into one or more of the four arms of the cross. In some cases for example, two of the cross' arms become bedrooms while the other two are left as balconies. A great number of variations become possible even within this basically simple geometric form. (Figure 2). The crosses themselves are then clustered in a variety of ways, such as square formation or in a cross formation again. (Figure 3).

Square towers, comprising such servient spaces like bathrooms and kitchens are located between the armes of adjacent crosses, while in the centre of each cluster a courtyard is formed, through which a system of staircases to feed the apartments is threaded. The roof was conceived as a promenade in a garden, with planting, a pool and other community facilities. In the first phase, built in 1970-1971, a single courtyard was planned and the arms of the crosses were made 4-metres wide. In the second phase however this dimension was increased to 5-metres to allow more flexibility. The scheme as completed contains five inter-connected courtyards around which are grouped the full range of apartments.

The basic construction of La Muralla consists of load bearing hollow block with rough-boarded floors. Although the project appears complex once the basic construction and the system of apartment types was established no more information was needed from the architects and the contractors, who incidentally were the firm of Emilio Bofill SA, could easily build it. The whole project was built for a total cost of 51 million pesetas (c. £M250,000 at today's rate of exchange, i.e. £58 per square metre).

Aesthetics

The project almost evokes a constructivist aesthetic. As its name implies, it is a sort of wall that continues the vertical line of the cliff face over the sea. In contrast with the Taller's earlier Plexus and Xanadu projects, which were an architectural response to the site and expressed the team's desire to integrate, synthesise and reflect the values and symbols of vernacular architecture, La Muralla Roja expresses the new desire to construct an object that complements the rough and arid site, born of an austere and dry climate, through contrast and opposition, in much the same way as the Greek Temples did. There is not doubt that "The Red Wall" does this strikingly.

Colour is one of the most outstanding characteristic of the Taller's work. Taking the Gaudí tradition a step further, they use it unashamedly and convincingly, whether it is an inherent property of the building materials or painted on; whether it is the landscape-inspired brownish-green of the Xanadu block or the sombre, mysterious purple of the Las Tres Coronas Hotel (or Kafka's Castle as Bofill likes to call it). The colours used in La Muralla Roja are no exception: Red, Blue, Pink and Purple. The colour scheme used is complex but easy to follow: bright red is used on the outside (hence the name of the project); blue in the central courtyard; subsidiary courtyards are painted pink, while other elements which do not fit into the main system such as certain staircases, bridges and retaining walls are painted purple. The colour scheme is refined even further by using each of the four main colours in four different values, dark to light, on different planes. Thus recesses in the wall are painted in the darkest shade, the main wall surface one shade lighter, the window frames and surrounds a shade lighter still, while projecting elements such as balconies are in the lightest shade of all. The result is a dynamic, vibrant, almost surrealistic environment to escape to from the grey urban areas.

And isn't it escapism that tourism is all about?

(Note: We would have like to illustrate this article with colour pictures of this building but at the moment this is beyond the possibilities of this magazine. (The Editor)).

CURIOUS METHODS TO 'SPEED UP' BUILDING CONSTRUCTION IN RUSSIA

A new system introduced into most Soviet cities in recent years is what is known as the AUTONOMOUS FINANCE SYSTEM. Its aim is to increase productivity in the building industry. It is thought that Moscow alone turns out 300 new homes a day, but city authorities still need to boost productivity to cope with housing demands.

The previous method was the traditional one of calling people of different skills on site as needed. One team laid the foundations, another built the walls, another welded and so on. Co-ordinating the different teams is very difficult and a delay by one would almost certainly put the other teams' schedules back too. In the autonomous finance system the brigade of building workers meets to negotiate with the city authorities the terms of their next contract. When the contract is finally signed, it will be to complete an entire school or polytechnic for a set price. If the workers complete the project for less, then they share out about half of the savings. The bonus comes in two parts, one for savings in time, and hence labour costs; and one for savings in materials and electricity.

The autonomous finance method involves a larger team which has learnt all the skills necessary to do the construction job on its own. The workers all have learnt more than one skill and when those inevitable delays occur, they can still make good use of their time. Under this system of flexibility, the building time has been drastically cut, while the employees have benefited from increases in pay. The process starts when the buildings administration for the district draws up a detailed costing for a project which also includes the exact number of men required for the job. For example, a standard school requires 46 men, a polyclinic 38 and a hospital 52. Next comes the scheduling which also includes delivery of supplies, followed by preliminary discussions with the leader of the brigade that will carry out the work.

Economy on the job includes using damaged bricks in parts of the wall where there is not much load bearing and by using concrete blocks for some of the walls. Also, one of the most serious causes of cost over-runs in the past was short delivery. When the site workers received a delivery of mortar, sand or bricks, there was previously no incentive for them to check whether the quantity delivered was correct. As soon as the accuracy of deliveries began to affect the size of their bonuses, however, the workers became far more rigorous. Workers even get a bonus of up to 0.02% of the value of the bricks they handle for keeping them intact. This can amount to a total of £600 on a typical large building. The total bonuses may be of the value of £1 per day per worker. The workers also save time by using

swifter methods of construction. Also the workers are now quick to report lack of resources where before they would have welcomed a break. Workers have also learnt more than their original trade with concrete workers standing in for carpenters or assemblers when they are absent through holidays or illness and so on. Some minor specialist trades have been phased out. For example, no one is on site just for filling in the gaps between windows and walls as everyone can do that now. Also bad weather has limited its effect on construction progress as when they say outside work is halted, all the workers move on to jobs inside. Through high productivity and thrift, a worker can effectively double his pay.

A temptation to skimp on safety or quality though exists and therefore the building authorities take stringent steps to ensure that this doesn't occur. There are frequent inspections to see whether the safety regulations are being fulfilled. If these rules are broken, the work is stopped and every stoppage means a loss of money to the brigade. The quality of work is inspected by 2 separate commissions. The first is made up of officials of the local building authority, including the chief engineer and the heads of the production and planning departments, together with the brigade leader and an ordinary worker from the brigade. Once these have passed approval on the building, it is reinspected again by a state commission including the original architect. When men are required to arrange faults, this means a reduction in bonuses due to loss of time on another project and prolongation of original construction time.

NOEL DEBATTISTA

Letters to the editor.

B.E.&A. - RIFORMI U KUMMENTI (Godfrey Vella)

Sur-Editor,

Il-problema tar-riformi fl-edukazzjoni hadet zewg editorjali shah tar-rivista grandjuza ARKITETTURA W AMBJENT. Gew ippublikati wkoll f'din ir-rivista diversi ittri li jittrattaw fuq is-suggett dwar il-vera riformi li hemm bzonn fil-kors tal-arkitettura.

Din is-sena 77/78 waslet biex tispicca. Nahseb li kulhadd jaqbel li din kienet sena diffiqli - sena diffiqli mhux min-habba ix-xoghol tal-kors imma minhabba l-problema tal-futur tal-kors stess u tal-Universita' li s'issa minn dejjem haddnet il-korsijiet ta' Arkitettura u Inġinerija.

Hawnhekk nigbed l-attenzjoni għall-editorjal ta' 'A-Arkitettura w Ambjent' Jan/Frar li jghid:

"Worth considering would be the setting up of an architecture and civil engineering school..."

Din kienet zelqa li zgur li l-editor ma xtaqx jagħmel. Uien, din lili ttini l-impressjoni li minn daqshokk l-editor ma jagħtiex kax jekk il-kors tal-arkitettura ikunx fi "skola" awtonoma fil-kampanja jew inkella fuq campus ta' Universita'. Matul iz-zminijiet, l-ewwel kien hemm "l-iskejjel tat-tagħlim" li kienu jagħtu lill-membri tal-iskola tagħlim fil-linja tagħhom biss. Imma tul il-medda taz-zmien, dawn l-iskejjel hassew il-bzonn li jinghaqdu flimkien u jiffurmaw Universitajiet fejn it-tagħlim sar aktar miftuh u mmirat lejn il-formazzjoni tal-bniedem u mhux it-tahrig f'sengha partikolari.

Dan hu wiehed fost l-affarijiet l-oħra li bhalissa qed jigu diskussi fir-riformi, id-differenza bejn l-Universita' l-Gdida u l-Qadima. Kif studenti tal-arkitettura, jafu sewwa, differenza hemm bejn it-tmexxija tal-KMAXT (MCAST) u dik tal-Universita'. Anke jekk, kif qal dan l-aħhar id-Direttur tal-Edukazzjoni, l-KMAXT jinghata xi poteri bil-mod il-mod, kif tkellon id-Direttur juri li ma tantx għandu f'mohhu li jhallieha tohrog minn taht idejh.

Madanakollu għalkemm din kienet sena ta' tibdil kbir li jekk isehh għad jibqa' jissemma fl-istorja ta' Malta, kien hemm min bas-soltu baqa' sejjer bix-xoghol tiegħu regolari qiesu qatt ma kien xejn

(referenza ittri ta' C.Ellul u C.Cacopardo Jan/Frar '78, pp.14-16). Dawn it-tipi ta' nies jaccettaw kull tibdil u ma jafux jifthu halqhom, lanqas fuq affarijiet li jirrigwardaw il-futur taghhom u ta' uliedhom. Iz-ZRING lil dawn in-nies iridhom bhala studenti, li ma jinteresshomx l-awtonomija tal-Universita', jew jekk il-kors taghhom isirx f'bini jew iehor, jew forsi barra fl-arja.

L-istudenti tal-Arkitettura ta' barra huma maghrufin bhala l-aktar attivi, u kienu huma fuq quddiem fl-irvellijiet ta' Franza f'Mejju (aqra l-Banham tar-reference shelves) tal-1968 qabel l-ezami jiet taghhom.

L-ezami jiet jigu u jmorru, imma wara x'hemm? X'jiswa li tilhaqq u tghaddi u tigi minn ta' l-ewwel u mbaghad issib ruhek f'kors li qatt ma ridt imma li tkun gibt fuqek permezz tas-silenzju stupidu tieghek meta "kulhadd" kien jistennik tiftah halqek.

L-istudent/perit irid ikun jaf jiffaccja lis-socjeta' li ser isib quddiemu l-quddiem, imma dan it-taghlim ma jfehdux biss mill-progetti u l-istudju, imma billi jkun konxju ghal dak li jigri madwaru u jitkellem u jagixxi meta jkun hemm bzonn.

Malta periti minn dawn ghandha bzonn u mhux dawn li jistghu jkun genji fil-qasam taghhom imma ghax ma jkunux jafu kif jaffrontaw il-hajja b'limitazzjonijiet ta' politikanti, ligijiet u affarijiet ohra jispicaw biex ma jirnexxu gatt.

B.E.&A. - REFORMS AND COMMENTS (Joseph M. Galea) (10/4/78)

Dear Sir,

I would be the last to say that all is well with the B.E.&A. course; I deeply share your concern over the future of this course, which, for reasons unknown, for the past decade, and even well before that, has been abused by people who should know better and made out to be the Cinderella of our University. Nevertheless, your editorial of the March/April issue of 'Arkitettura w Ambjent', "B.E.&A. Course: What Future?" although prompted, I am sure, by a sincere wish for improvement, may give rise to some false impressions.

I will not go into the long and turbulent history of the course except to say that a combined architectural and civil engineering education has long been the norm in Malta, and is not something devised a few years ago. Such an education has, over the years, turned out many professionals and enabled them, if they so wished and as many in fact did, to specialise, at any foreign university or professional institute, in any architectural and/or engineering field of their choice. The first degree course in Architecture and Civil Engineering, like all other first degree courses, produced, and still aims to produce, generalists not specialists. Your comment regarding "..... Jack of all trades" is, therefore, felt to be unnecessary and unfairly derogatory to yourself, sir, your student colleagues and the course as a whole.

You mention the lack of dialogue between the two departments and state that the department at MCAST did not have the timetable followed at Tal-Qroqq. This is surprising since this year's timetables had been discussed and agreed upon at the start of the academic year between the long-acting Head of the Department of Architecture and the short-lived Head of Civil Engineering. Very few basic changes, if any, have occurred in the timetable since then. You seem to impute the lack of dialogue to the physical separation between MCAST and Tal-Qroqq, but the truth lies in the absence of definitive heads of department who together can chart out one long-term common course. The dialogue which was beginning to emerge with Mr. Towler was abruptly cut short with his departure.

Your proposals for a re-structured course, then, are basically sound and I will not go into their merits but again you seem to imply that the suggestions are novel to the course. Thus, for instance, despite the lack of dialogue, design projects are, (as far as possible in the present circumstances) and have been in the past, "formulated to suit both architecture and civil engineering fields". Students are asked to prepare other drawings besides architectural ones. Surely, sir, you know that students complain they are asked to prepare too much!

As regards judging of design projects, all lecturers are welcome to juries and student comments are always actively encouraged. Up to the last academic year, civil engineering staff used to attend end of term and final reviews of project work regularly. Past and present students can bear me out on this.

Regarding your proposal for an interchange scheme with foreign students, it may be interesting to note that a couple of years ago informal discussions had been started to establish such a scheme with the Architectural Association School in London, and the Department of Architecture at Canterbury University. Of course, problems existed, money being the major one, but I am sure something could be worked out given the good will, interest and effort on the part of all concerned. I suggest S.A.C.E.S. put this on the agenda of a future meeting.

Finally, sir, with you I believe that a rational implementation of the student-worker concept with full staffing and teaching facilities

and above all a "clear" atmosphere to see the way ahead can further improve the standard of the B.E.&A. course.

But as your editorial, clearly indicated, sir, the present uncertainty is breeding only frustration.

NOTE: We are very pleased to observe that our magazine is generating such interest amongst our readers that it is giving rise to a dialogue which, as was mentioned in the editorial of the first issue, is one of our basic aspirations (also note the great numbers of contribution to the 'Letters to the Editor's Column'). For this reason we would like to thank Mr. Galea for his keen interest, being one of the two full-time lecturers of the Architecture Department, might be in the know of things which we would know little or nothing about.

From Mr. Galea's comments it looks as if there have been some misunderstandings which we will now attempt to clarify.

(1) As Mr. Galea very rightly pointed out, some of our suggestions are not exactly new. However, one has to bear in mind that this magazine (we hope) isn't only read by students and lecturers of the Architecture and Civil Engineering Department so that what may seem old hat to such readers would be new to others. Hence in our editorial we emphasized some points which even though they may be in practice presently, we would like to stress further. In this way we hope to let the authorities know what our priorities are.

(2) As regards the timetables, the one pinned to the Civil Engineering notice board at MCAST dates back to the first term (a new one is issued every week at Tal-Qroqq). In both cases, i.e. at MCAST and Tal-Qroqq, the timetables are, to quite an extent, inaccurate, as regards each other's hours. Since Mr. Galea apparently is unaware of such changes, this confirms our "lack of dialogue" argument.

(3) Both courses, especially the Fourth Year students, could have done with some more structural working drawings. To a certain extent this is due to the lack of a lecturer teaching structural design throughout most of this year. Learning a subject and being unable to put it into practice is what was meant by, "Jack of all trades"

We would like to remind our readers that we will always provide space gladly for dialogue on such an important subject, i.e. the B.E.&A. Course, and for this reason we would like to encourage anyone who wants to voice his opinion to write to us at the Department of Architecture, Tal-Qroqq.

(The Editors)

S.A.C.E.S. (Carmel Cacopardo - Segretarju S.A.C.E.S.)

Sur Editor,

B'referenza ghall-ittra taht it-titlu ta' S.A.C.E.S. ffirmata minn "Figolla" li dehret fil-pubblikazzjoni tieghek "A-Arkitettura w Ambjent" f'pagna tlettax ta' Volume 1 No.3 Mar/Apr 1978, bejn is-seba' u l-ghaxar vers tat-tieni paragrafu kien hemm referenza ghat-Tezorer tas-S.A.C.E.S. fejn il-korrispondent tieghek seta ta' l-impressjoni lill-qarreja li t-Tezorer bghabas il-fondi tas-S.A.C.E.S. Aparti l-fatt li m'hemmx wisq f'hiex tintilef meta ssemmi fondi, dik in-nofs lira li kull student tal-arkitettura (bl-eccezzjoni ta' tnejn) taw lit-Tezorer gew mghoddija lill-Board Editorjali zmien ilu.

B'referenza ghall-kumplament tal-ittra, fejn il-korrispondent allega inattivita' da parti tas-S.A.C.E.S., nistieden lill-"Figolla" biex wara dak il-panigirku, u wkoll johrog minn gol-fosdqa tal-apatija u jippartecipa f'wiehed mis-sottokomitati li s-S.A.C.E.S. ser twagqaf. Hemm bzonn min jikkritika: izda hemm bzonn ta' hafna aktar li jippartecipaw biex jitwettaq tibdil mehtieg biex forsi tingered ghal fut jew ghal dejjem dik l-apatija li ta' spiss tissemma f'din il-publikazzjoni.

WHEN THE VIKINGS CAME MARCHING IN! (Ray Farruiga - Second Year)

Dear Sir,

A good number of my second year colleagues and myself, have taken particular exception to part of Noel DeBattista's contribution to your column "Letters to the Editor", which reads:

"All I know is that I have the displeasure of having met some of the most egoistic bums (for use of a 'better' word) ever." (Direct reference to second year students)

If Mr. DeBattista goes around billing people 'BUMS' (or other 'worse' words) on the pretext he mentions in his letter then one won't be wrong in calling his first contribution to our publication - 'BANAL' rather than 'dirty linen' (his very own words!).

Let's put the picture straight! The first floor studio is 'officially' the 'homeground' of second year students. At the end of some lesson from the ground floor lecture room, students naturally go up to their cubicles normally to place their cases in their lockers or perhaps pick up some book they have to return to the library. And this is where our great act of crime is committed, according to Mr. DeBattista (billed as 'non-chalant' attitude!). Has it ever occurred to your correspondent, that second year students are not aware when or when not our dear fourth year comrades (somebody was calling them mobbers!) have a lecture in 'our' studio!

Thinking of a simple remedy to the problem, one may consider sticking one of them signposts on the studio entrance door proclaiming 'Lecture on!' Would this be asking too much! It would solve many problems and maybe we'll make Mr. DeBattista a 'little' happier man.

In another part of the same letter he goes on to write:

"..... when they enter the studio during one of our lectures for every minute reason possible, making the most disturbance they can".

Noel DeBattista seems to be describing some bunch of rampant hooligans (Nordic Vikings) crushing in onto the studio desks, pulling down all them lamps and cubicles down, chairs flying in the air, comrade students beaten up, lecturers terrified and shocked!! Oh come on Noel, surely you can put up something better than that; let's all give honest impressions! And talking about good and bad impressions take my word your letter definitely ain't a member of the former group!

CINEMA SAFETY (Towering Inferno)

Dear Sir,

A few days ago I went to see a film in a leading cinema in Valletta and since I obtained my ticket at the very last moment, my seat was unfortunately (financially speaking) situated in the balcony. On my way up I had to pass, literally, through a maze of staircases (some four or five different flights), most of which were just wide enough to squeeze through two medium sized people together. After a few mishaps, during one of which I nearly finished up in the ladies, I managed to arrive at my seat. The lights went out and the film show started. With some difficulty I just could make out the picture through the smoke - no, the theatre wasn't on fire; it was just cigarette smoke (I thought there was a law which prohibited that sort of thing).

For a few moments I let my thoughts wander. Suppose the cinema had been on fire, what would have been the easy way out. As far as I could see such a way did not exist. This was further confirmed when on my way out, I passed through a similar maze of narrow staircases as before. Imagine the stampede such a fire would cause through all these staircases. Very few would manage to get out, quite a few would get run over and a lot would be trapped in.

As far as I know, here in Malta fire regulations which have to be applied in the planning of such public places are as vague as to be inexistent. I think the time has come to define such a set of regulations. Most countries in the world have them and in some cases, as in Britain, they are really very tight and a great deal of attention is given to their application. The authorities concerned with the welfare of the people should remedy this. These

authorities shouldn't allow the formulation of such regulations to follow the traditional pattern - first the disaster occurs and then we begin thinking of finding the adequate solution. Disasters have to be averted for they only mean one thing - the death of many, many persons.

L-EXCELSIOR, L-IMNAJDRA W IS-SWAR TAL-BELT (Carmel Cacopardo)

Sur Editor,

Bosta kienu dawki li fis-sittinijiet ikkritikaw il-bini tal-lukanda Excelsior. Din il-kritika kienet f'postha, b'rizultat li meta l-imbni tal-lukanda din giet integrata f'dik li intom issejhulha "landscape".

Donnu z-zminijiet inbidlu. Propju s-sena l-ohra kellna l-kawza tal-Imnajdra fejn l-hekk imsejjah interess ekonomiku (??) tpoqgħa qabel il-harsien tal-wirt nazzjonali. Il-kritika li saret tqieset b'tixwix, u bhala bastun fir-rotta tal-progress industrijali. Tghid din ir-rejazzjoni rresponsabbli tal-awtoritajiet hija l-kawza li qad hadd, jew kwazi hadd, ma fetah fomm minn meta l-Prim Ministru għal habbar fl-ahhar tas-sena li ser jinnew xi toroq? Fosthom semma dik it-triq li ser tghaddi minn idjen il-Rixkerija biex twassal sa quddiem dak li l-Inglizi kienu jsejhulu n-"Knights Hall".

Tafu li dan il-progett huwa l-kawza tal-qenda tas-"St. Christopher Bastion" li ga twagga' ???? Tistghu tmorru tarawh mill-Barrakka t'isfel. Meta ser inqajmu kuxjenza nazzjonali li tkun kapaci tirrezisti dan is-sadizmu legalizzat? Meta ser isemmghu lehinhom DIN L-ART HELWA, il-4 Ts HISTORICAL SOCIETY, u s-S.A.C.E.S.? Meta jhottu l-Auberge ta' Kastilja? Meta?

ARCHITECT'S FARM (Philip B. Grech)

Dear Sir,

I would like to comment on the present social currents in the B.E.&A. II course. One thing which stands out and is most noted is the cut-throat competition which exists. We have a situation of every man for himself, of people setting up studying cliques, of carefully selected and reserved books, of fierce rivalry to be better than to be good. What is also deplorable is the social ostracism and quasi boycott of some students by others. Like children who tease or don't talk to each other; or boys who have their toys taken away. 'He who has ears let him hear' (Mt. 13;43).

(continued p.42)

THE CHANNEL CROSSING

(A brief outline of the projects planned for a tunnel under the English channel joining England and France.)

For 176 years, engineers, statesmen and amateur mechanics have dreamt of building a tunnel underneath the turbulent waters of the English channel.

A French engineer named Albert Mathieu was the first to propose a channel tunnel - from here on called a 'chunnel' - in 1802. He envisaged an 18-mile passage with a roadbed for carriages, lit by oil lamps, and with ventilation chimneys sticking out of the water. An artificial island in mid-channel would provide a stop where horses could come up for a breath of air. Napoleon was quite taken with the plan. During the short-lived Peace of Amiens he touted Mathieu's tunnel to former British Secretary of State, Charles James Fox, who approved in principle. But the following year England and France were again at war.

Mathieu's imaginative scheme gave rise to a number of schemes of varying practicability. But it was not until 1875 that the French and British Governments finally authorized work on a tunnel - the French still with considerable more enthusiasm than the British. In 1878, the French started driving a "pilot tunnel" out from Sangatte, five miles west of Calais; the British began three years later in the Dover Area.

The French company's geologic soundings confirmed that a thick stratum of grey chalk lay clear across the straits of Dover. The chalk was both impervious to water and relatively soft - perfect for tunnelling. For a time all went well and elaborate luncheons were held in an underground banquet room adjoining the diggings. Journalists, bankers, members of Parliament, and other big-heads including the Archbishop of Canterbury, all flocked to see the wonder under the channel. By 1881, however, the English War office had become alarmed. If there were ever another war with France, the tunnel might facilitate an enemy invasion. The tunnellers argued that their 'engineering marvel' could be destroyed or rendered unusable in event of war. But the alarmists carried the day; work stopped. Drillings at the two ends then measured almost a mile each in length. Ironically as Marshal Foch commented after the First World War, 'If the English and French had a tunnel under the channel in 1914, the war would have been shortened by at least two years'.

In 1954, Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, great-grandson of the founder of the old French Tunnel company, determined to give the ancient cause another whirl. He signed up various people into a new tunnel company including Jacques Georges-Picot, director-general of the affluent Suez Canal Company. But in 1956 President Nasser suddenly nationalized the Suez Canal; this event so complicated affairs for Georges-Picot's company that the 'chunnel' project was again brought to a standstill.

Contemporarily the 'Channel Tunnel Study Group' was formed; a joint venture of the French and English tunnel companies, Technical Studies Inc., and the Suez Company. Coming afresh to a new problem, the group made extensive geologic, hydrographic and engineering studies - using sound wave charting of underwater geological strata, deep borings, and even frogmen to collect scrapings from the channel floor. They decided in favour of a rail tunnel instead of a road tunnel - the latter would require an enormously expensive ventilation system to deal with the exhaust fumes of thousands of cars. The proposed tunnel, between points near Folkstone and Calais will be the longest transport tunnel in the world; about 23 out of its 32 miles will be under water. The tunnel advocates encountered opposition from a group in France which campaigned for an enormous cross-channel bridge. For two years, a French-British governmental committee examined the feasibility of both bridge and tunnel. Its report published in September 1963 favoured a rail tunnel as cheaper. Also, since the English channel is an international waterway, all maritime nations using it would have consent to a bridge; a single hold out such as the Soviet Union, could block it. On the other hand, a tunnel requires only a treaty between France and England.

A remaining question involves the choice between a 'bored tunnel' and an 'immersed tube'. The latter would be constructed by laying prefabricated concrete tubing in a trench dug in the channel bed. Once in place, the tube would be roofed over with rock and gravel. On the other hand, 'boring' a tunnel through the chalk bed is as practical today as when first attempted over 94 years ago - and much faster. Huge rotary drilling machines, powered by electricity, each with a cutting face of 24 feet in diameter would push forward at the rate of nearly 1,800 feet a month. The durability of the chalk has been proved by the old tunnels: they are still intact after being abandoned in 1883. When the study group's engineers visited the English tunnel, the atmosphere was dark, and here and there some of the greyish chalk had crumbled from the unlined walls, but there was surprisingly little seepage after all that time - only a couple of feet of water in the wettest parts. With proper maintenance, in a bored-tunnel that is concrete lined, seepage is no problem.

The envisaged 'chunnel' consists in fact of 3 tunnels. There are 2 single track tunnels, through which passenger, goods and vehicle trains will travel at 60 m.p.h. These will be illuminated throughout. Separating the 2 tunnels will be a service tunnel for maintenance, drainage, communication and power facilities. Passageways every 270 yards provide for emergency access to either main tunnel. Two sources of electricity - English and French - will ensure continuous service for the electric locomotives. Ventilation will be provided for the most part by the 'piston effect' of the train pushing stagnant air in front of it and sucking fresh air in behind. But there will also be a supplementary system of fans installed inside the tunnel at regular intervals.

Cars and lorries will be 'piggy-backed' on double decker trains, each with a capacity of about 300 vehicles. Motorist will drive on to enclosed trucks, which will be wide enough to permit passengers

to stroll about. A ceiling aerial, the full length of each channel, will allow passengers to enjoy radio and television during the trip. The cross-channel trip would mean a reduction of nearly two hours in the voyage time, a 30% reduction on sea-ferry fares and a 50% reduction on freight fares.

All this was planned before a one million pounds Government sponsored survey carried out in summer of 1965 and it was calculated that by 1972 travellers would be able to shuttle under water between England and France as easily as they now cross the Thames or the Siene. But like all the previous projects on the 'chunnel' the project was once again brought to a grinding standstill, and most probably the controlling factor is the cost - a minimum of three hundred million pounds. So until some bright guy comes up with a 'fourth dimension' thought, the turbulent waters of the English channel will continue doing their fine job in promoting sea-sickness.

ANTHONY BAILEY

ARTICLES FOR SPECIAL EDITION

READERS ARE REMINDED THAT ARTICLES TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PUBLICATION IN OUR SPECIAL EDITION OF 'A-ARKITETTURA W AMBJENT' ARE TO BE HANDED IN TO THE DEPARTMENT'S SECRETARY BY NOT LATER THAN 31st JULY, 1978. ARTICLES HAVE TO HAVE AS THEIR MAIN THEME "ARCHITECTURE - CIVIL ENGINEERING - ENVIRONMENT". PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS/SKETCHES ACCOMPANYING ANY CONTRIBUTION SHOULD PREFERABLY BE IN BLACK AND WHITE. ARTICLES ARE NOT TO EXCEED THE 5,000 WORD LIMIT, PREFERABLY TYPED.

Periodicals

BI-MONTHLY REVIEW C. BUHAGIAR

Selection from Foreign Periodicals

While going through the periodicals at MCAST, I came across an issue of BUILDING (Mar. 1978) a magazine which is omitted from the list I provided in Vol. I, No. 1. Leafing through this magazine I found quite a few interesting articles but the one which I found to be the best was called, "High Fashion in Paris". I will quote the introduction, for it puts into a nut-shell the gist of this article; "The Eiffel Tower once dominated the Paris skyline in a city more renowned for the warmth and human scale of its Left Bank than for large scale highrise. But the famous capital is changing more than most in Europe - and the trend is up".

Redevelopment has changed Paris into a totally new place. Various schemes have been proposed to cope with the ever expanding Paris population and to accommodate such an expansion five big new towns are being built outside the Paris conurbation - Cergy-Pontoise, St. Quentin-en-Yvelin, Melun-Senart, Marne-la-Vallee and Evry. Another two such schemes were carried out at La Defense and Creteil.

La Defense, the space age section of Paris - a stunning concrete complex of skyscrapers, motorways and railway lines - is taking shape only a few minutes ride from the Opera and the city's historic centre. At La Defense, a vast concrete platform forms a 40-hectare pedestrian precinct around the skyscrapers. The biggest skyscraper, the Fiat tower, has 44 floors of offices. Underneath the platform a labyrinth of subterranean tunnels, passages and galleries is being built to provide access by car, bus, train and metro. Many of the people who lived in the area before its redevelopment are being rehoused at La Defense. Flats will eventually be provided in the central area for 20,000 people. Amongst the services provided there will be a three-storey, 128,000 sq.m. shopping precinct; parking is planned for 30,000 cars. Conveyor belts for pedestrians are also planned.

Creteil, seven kilometers from the center of Paris, is one of the most ambitious of the several projects now being undertaken in the city's suburbs - its population, from 8,000 ten years ago, is expected to reach 120,000 by 1985. At Creteil the locals gave the name "Choux" (cabbages) to their houses; the 651 flats with their balconies in the form of leaves were officially called "Les epis" (ears of corn). The cabbages are the showpiece of the residential quarter of the town now being expanded as the capital of the department of Val-de-Marne, the eighth biggest population grouping in France. This plan incorporates an administrative and commercial center, including the striking town hall, the prefecture which houses the administration of the department, a cultural center

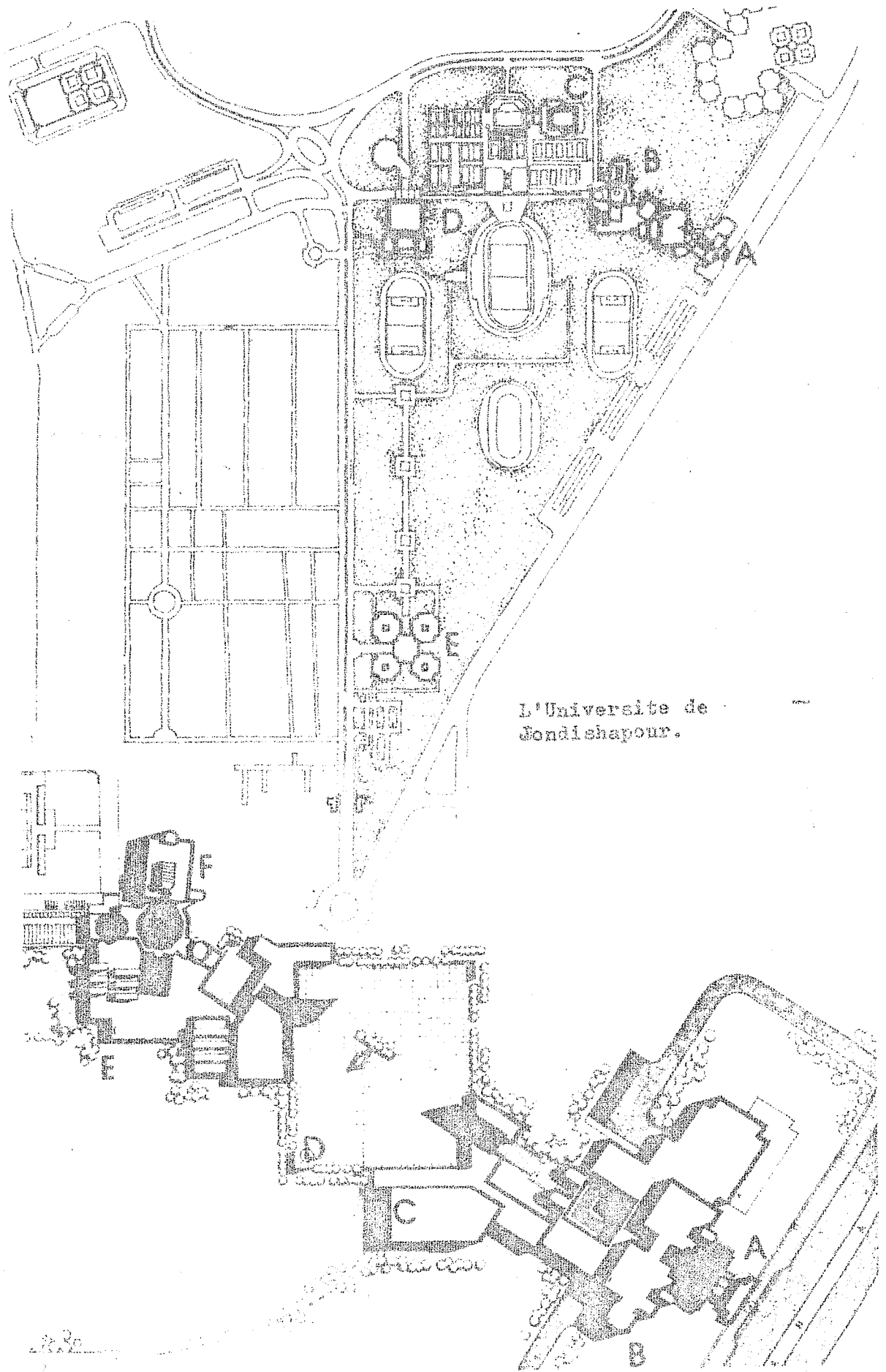


and a shopping center, said to be the biggest in Europe. It also has its own university. Creteil's center is built around an artificial lake. The idea is to create a living, active city and not just a dormitory for central Paris. In this way it is hoped that a solution is found to end the anarchical urban development and to cope with the needs of an ever expanding population.

Other features of interest are: "Continuing Campaign" - continuing education for the professional is a subject enjoying a big revival. The York center has just published an important report on the subject and Gordon Graham has pledged RIBA to the cause. "Bridging the Gap" - an interview with Sir Lou Sherman, chairman of the Housing Corporation whose most satisfying task is that of effectively filling in the housing gaps left by local authorities and the two sector system. "Home Safety" discusses why 2,000 - 6,000 people die each year in house accidents under various sub-titles such as "Bath Traps", "Stair Flaws", "Watch your Step" and "Ash to Ashes".

L'ARCHITECTURE D'AUJOURD HUI (Feb. 1978) devotes most of its space to architecture in the African continent by its two main features, "Architectures Iraniennes" and "Hassan Fathy". The feature, "Architectures Iraniennes" contains various articles including, "Reflexion sur l'architecture contemporaine en Iran", (Reflections on contemporary Iranian architecture); "Recherche d'un nouveau vocabulaire", (Architectural Vocabulary of a new generation); and "Project de reanimation du centre historique de Ghazirme", (Redevelopment Project for the historical center of Ghazirme). Other articles review various buildings such as the Museum of Contemporary Art, Teheran; Bu Ali Sina University, Hamadam University at Jondishapour; Musical Center at Teheran and the Iranian Embassy at Djeddah.

The works of Hassan Fathy have put him amongst the three greatest names of architecture in our times. Fathy tries to combine ancient Egyptian culture and Islamic heritage with environmental studies to produce modern buildings, "constructed for the people". In this feature one finds various articles, such as, "L'histoire des Moucharabieh", (the history of Moucharabehs) - a kind of architectural table; "Le Village de Gourna", (the village of Gourna) - to design peasant houses, the architect thinks of himself as a peasant; "Village de Bary, Oasis Kharga", (village at Bary) - the creation of a new village for an entire community; "Palais a Tabouk" (place for a V.I.P. in Tabouk, Saudi Arabia) - a house which respects the basic nature and techniques of the Arab house; "Institut Cultural a Louqsor", (Cultural Institute at Louqsor) and



L'Universite de Jondishapur.

"Festival du Nil a Louqsor", (The Nile festival at Louqsor).

"SITE Inc. are a group of New York artists who put themselves very much in the public eye by practising a series of urban fantasies on some of the very ordinary buildings belonging to a mail order chain." This is the introduction of the most interesting article, "Through the Looking Glass", to be found in the ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW (Mar.1978).

These artists have come up with the notion of "Urban Art". The business of art is to provoke thought, to throw into new light the whole system and way of life the viewer is committed to. For this purpose, this group decided to bring art out of the gallery and museum and give it a wide screen of the urban outdoors - as they put it, "to use architecture's environmental psychology as a medium". Urban art has to satisfy two conditions: its effect must be instantaneous and this effect is obtained by the dramatisation of the place itself, worked out of already existing elements.

Here are some of the fantasies produced by SITE:

"Best Products Retail Center", Virginia, to which SITE applied "peeling brick corners"; "Almeda Genoa Shopping Center", Houston, where SITE built up the enclosing walls as a man made ruin, with a cascade of bricks apparently tumbling down the canopy; another project at Baltimore presents a savage bite taken out of the bottom corner of the building; "Ghost Parking Lot", Connecticut - along the edge of the car park a line of "graves" has been dug; into these are tipped discarded automobiles; these are filled with concrete grout and the whole asphalted over.

The work of SITE represents the introduction, the principles of conceptual art, into architecture and building. The modern set-up has had us set values on sharp, shocking events which will "shake us out of our routine". Because of this, SITE Inc. suggest that it is the prime function of art to provide us with a series of shocks which will do this for us.

Other articles of interest are: "Civil Service City" - the Government Offices at Canberra, a megastructure designed by John Andrews International, presents a revised picture of the office building both as an urban element and as a work environment; "Murray Mews" - the design of a house at Camden, London, on a restricted site, further hemmed in by planning regulations, and a preservation order on an adjacent tree; "Interior Design" - the clients of a New York restaurant feel as if they are suspended in a luxury liner on silent clouds 1,300ft above ground level.

"Tomorrow's Architects" is a survey of the schools of architecture carried out by THE ARCHITECTS' JOURNAL (17th Mar.1978). The following are the schools which were surveyed in this issue (this is part II of this feature; part I was printed in a previous issue):

- Liverpool - University and Polytechnic.
- London - University College, Architectural Association, Central London Polytechnic, North London Polytechnic, North-East London Polytechnic, South Bank Polytechnic and Thames Polytechnic.
- Manchester - Polytechnic and University.
- Newcastle - University.
- Nottingham - University.
- Oxford - Polytechnic.
- Plymouth - Polytechnic.
- Portsmouth - Polytechnic.
- Sheffield - University.

This feature contained various points of interest:

- i. In some schools, as the Department of Architecture in the Polytechnic of the South Bank, London, various departments, such as that of building administration, building economics, civil and structural engineering, estate management, town and planning and environmental science and technology have been successfully put into operation under one powerful center - the Faculty of the Built Environment.
- ii. It is interesting to note how various schools combine academic study with site work; for example, "live" projects are given to the fourth year students attending the Department of Architecture and Surveying at Liverpool Polytechnic, followed by a year out, delayed until then to make use of a live project experience and lessons learnt from professional practice lectures; in the School of Environmental Studies, University College, London, fourth year students spend six months in London, working for an architect and six months working for a builder while maintaining at all times a close link with the school through their practical training advisers.
- iii. Schools can be classified in the fields they excel: the AA School seems to be trying to push the frontiers of architecture as an art; others, such as the Department of Architecture of the North-East London Polytechnic, cater for competent technical architects who know how to detail and draw but produce solid, rather dull buildings; some schools, like the Department of Architecture of Sheffield University, are renowned for their high standard of presentation.
- iv. It is also interesting to note that in most of the above schools, final year students, as is the practice in our University, are asked to produce a dissertation, starting on it during their fourth year of studies, and a thesis produced during their fifth year.

I would like to suggest to anyone who is interested in the restructuring of the B.E.&A. Course to take a look at this article for I am sure that some points which are mentioned here, can be applied with positive results to our course of studies.

talkabout.

R. FARRUGIA & A. BAILEY.

THE MELLIEHA HOLIDAY COMPLEX - PART II

Courtyard

The accompanying sketch to this article, gives a clear idea of the very much characteristic internal courtyard, expected to be a marked feature, in each of the separate dwellings. This can be easily compared to the spacious courtyard of the good old Maltese farmhouse. Note, for example, the staircase on the side that leads to an open terrace, a landmark of the Maltese 'vernacular'. As was pointed in our last issue the Danish architect behind the project went into great pains to ensure that what will be built lies in conformity with the local scene.

Landscaping

Of considerable interest is the fact that great significance was given in the initial design stages to the relevance of proper landscaping. Spaces between dwelling 'blocks', were carefully considered and vegetation areas were deliberated. This process involved the careful study of what type of vegetation would be ideal for the particular surroundings (being very close to the sea). To ensure complete success for this scheme, a nursery has been established in a spot of land on the Western side of the site. Here a great variety of trees and plants are constantly under careful care, later to be used to form part of the landscape of the 'village'. Vegetation is expected to be placed in terraces, in conformity with the slopy site, using suitable rubble walls to further enhance the 'local' look!

Construction

Constructionally speaking there is enough going on, on site to merit a separate feature. Great interest was shown by all members of our visiting group on one damp proofing system used for roofs. Essentially this consists of a two-inch thick jablo overlay right on the concrete roof slab, topped by a plastic layer covered with an aluminium membrane with a final mastic seal round the edges - this last part of the process ensures all round tightness at joints, known to be quite a weak spot for water penetration. The lot is then covered with screed, the whole laid to falls. Such damp proofing systems may sound out of the world for a building industry like ours, where the conventional bituminous based method has established solid, firm roots! (Our guide took great pride in showing us this one particular feature!).

Another interesting constructional feature worthy of notice is the way plumbing has been installed. The idea of 'conduit' has been extended to water pipes, where the supply pipes have been placed in conduits, and in case of mishap, the procedure would be to pull out the required pipes rather than break up whole walls to fix the failure. Noticeable is the complete wall tiling in the bathrooms from ground to ceiling level. Imagine what a mess it would turn out to be, in case of some plumbing trouble in the bathroom trying to locate the failure. Pulling all of the tiles down would be no joke! This indeed justifies the conduit piping system used in the plumbing installations.

Finalisation

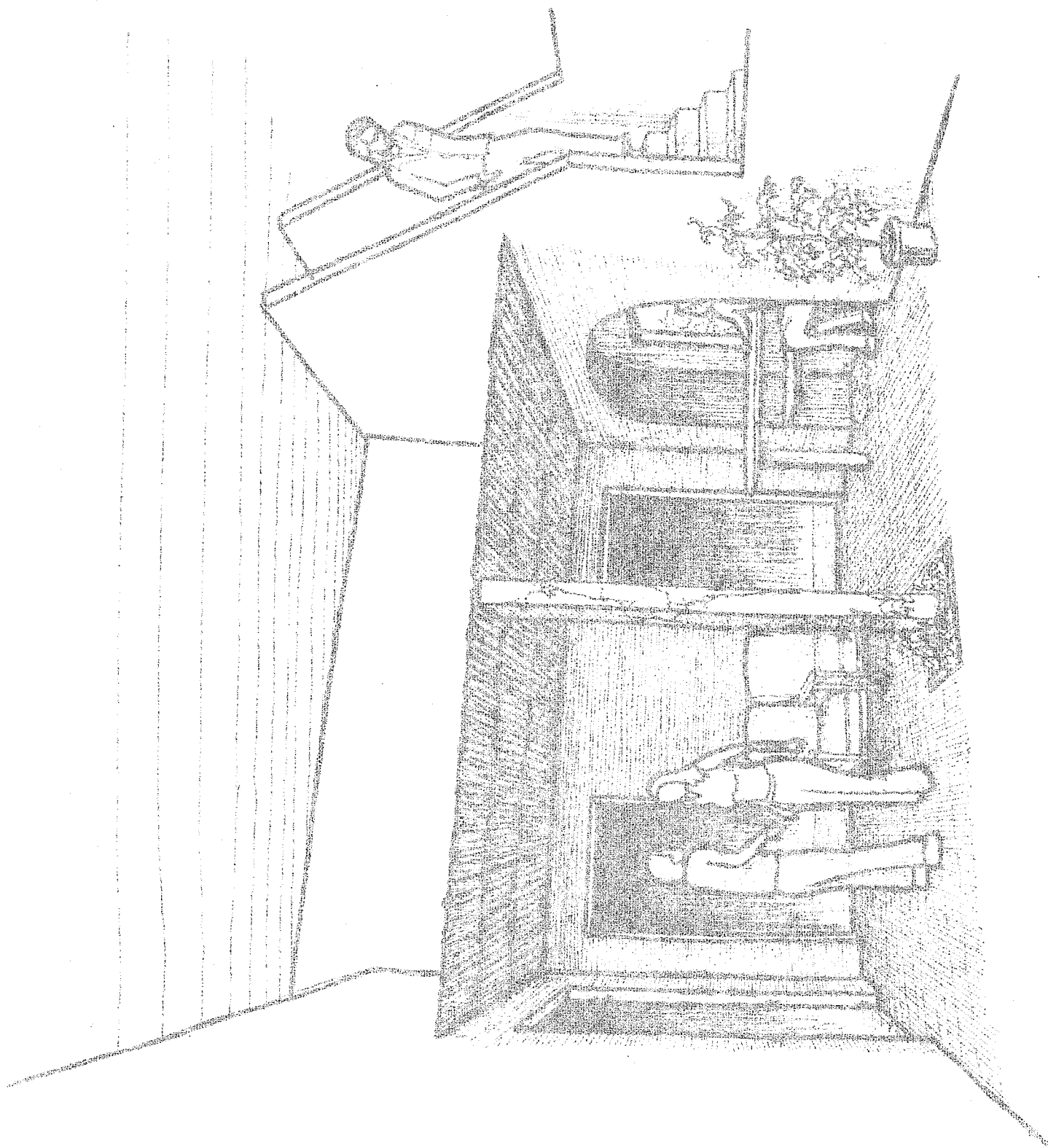
The work rate on site is very much encouraging. At least that's the common remark from the site administrators we met on our visit. That this is one of the most ambitious projects undertaken (locally) for a good number of years is unquestionable. That it is progressing at a marked rate is to the credit of all that have contributed to its realization.

The target set for its finalisation is less than twelve months away that it will be operateable by then, is a guarantee pledged by the administrators.

Author's Note:

We would like to thank Mr. Joe Saliba, Mr. Paul Gauci and Mr. Paul Sammut for their full co-operation on our site visit. To Mr. Dinko Radich our thanks for giving us kind permission to enter the specimen dwelling.

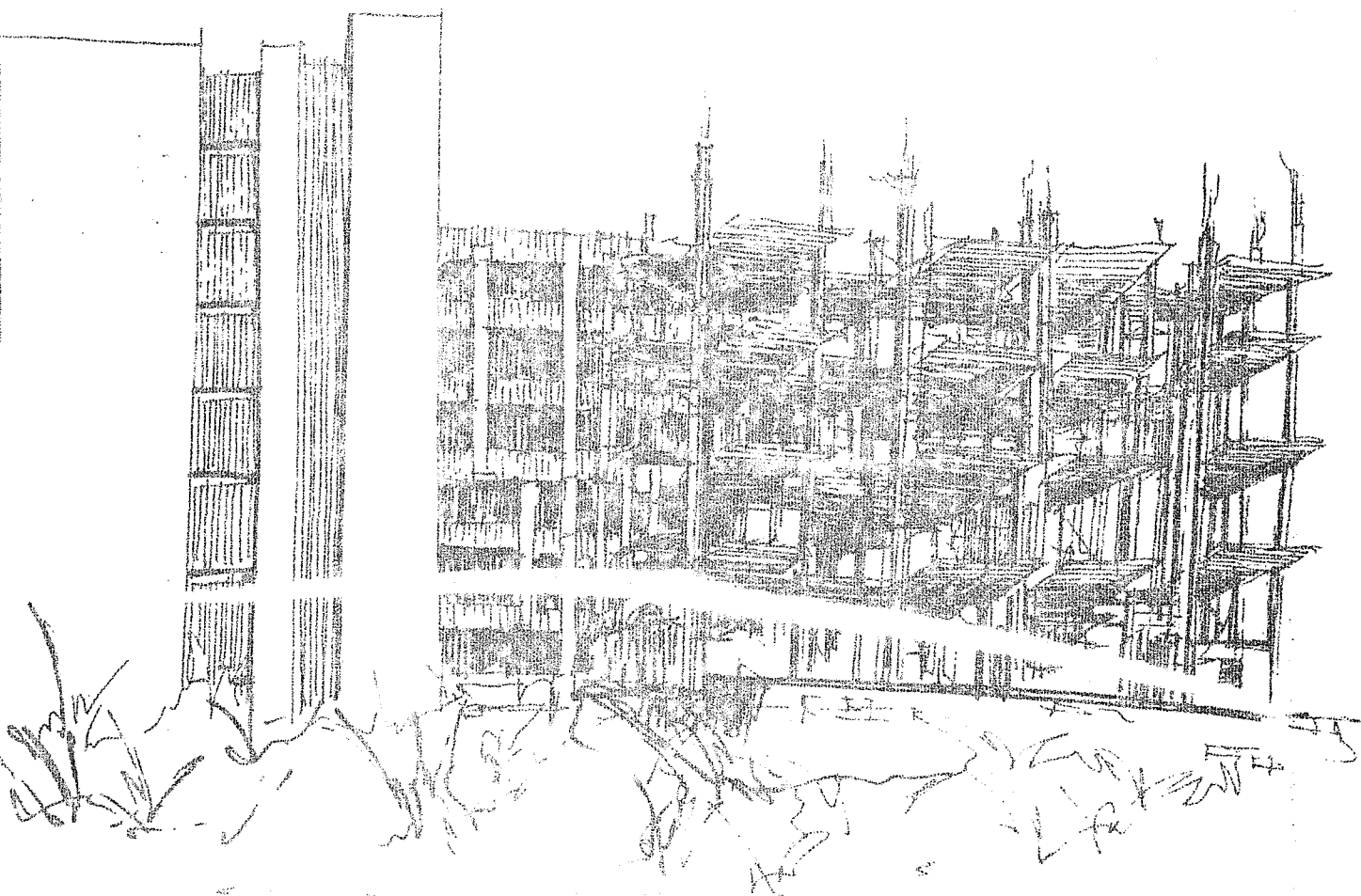
Initially we had drawn up a list of buildings now under construction which we intended to cover for the 'Talkabout' feature. However, due to lack of space and also time we could not possibly cover the whole lot. The St. Theresa Sanctuary at B'Kara, the Avis Garage at Msida, the Shopping Arcade at Mgarr, Gozo, the Fgura Parish Church, the proposed new hotel at St. Thomas Bay, etc. etc. are some of the examples we had in mind of covering. We earnestly hope of being back, come next academic year to keep you well informed on what's going on at these and other building sites all over the islands!



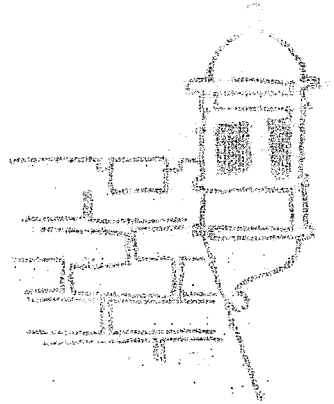
A. CAMILLERI

EYESORE

For some reason the last block at St. George's Park has been left unfinished for several years. A solution should be found as quickly as possible to eliminate this eyesore



Valletta



development

BY CARMEL CACOPARDI

PART II

POST GREAT SIEGE

After the Great Siege, many of the Knights wished to leave Malta and settle in a safer place, less isolated from help; everyone believed that the Turks would return to renew the Siege. The Knights had three alternatives (25), and a bold decision was required:

- i) the complete evacuation of Malta which would entail the demolition of the remaining fortifications so that they could not be turned to use by the Turks;
- ii) secondly, there was the possibility of rebuilding on the existing site, but its shortcomings would still be there and the Turks would be unlikely to repeat their mistakes;
- iii) thirdly, the opportunity of realizing La Vallette's dream of building a new city for the Order on the peninsula of Mount Shebb ir-Ras.

Although immensely costly, the position obtained due to the third alternative would be impregnable (26).

La Vallette applied to Pius IV for the services of an expert architect well versed in town planning and the design of fortifications, to be sent to Malta to take charge of the preparations of the new City. For this task, the Pope chose Francesco Laparelli da Cortona, an assistant of Michaelangelo and a man with wide experience of military defenses having among other commissions, been employed by the Pope on the defenses of The Vatican (27).

(25) HUGHES, City of the Knights, p.70.

(26) HUGHES, The Planned City of Valletta, p.374.

(27) HUGHES, Military Architecture, p.107.

Francesco Laparelli da Cortona, and Baldassare Lanci from Urbino were the last two military engineers to contribute to the building of the new City. Laparelli's contribution is well known and fully documented in the Codex which he himself wrote whilst on the island (28). Lanci's work is more problematic - the main evidence of his design being contained in a memorandum written by Laparelli in his Codex (29). Lanci was probably the greatest practicing military engineer of his time. Born in 1510 he visited Malta in 1562, three years before the Siege (30). He could not have remained here for more than three months, because in August he was writing to the Duke Cosimo about the Siena fortifications on which he was working. His practice was extensive, and he designed fortresses in many parts of Italy. In the year of the Siege he was engaged in the design and construction of Tierra del Sole, a town laid out in quadrangular form (31).

Laparelli's description of the method of fortifying a city, of the performance of building materials, and the use and availability of labour are particularly interesting, as the fortification of Valletta is the only one of his commissions which still survives quasi-intact. Laparelli's ideas are not particularly original, but he had discussed all sources and their implications with his fellow engineers, and this knowledge, coupled with years of practical experience, made the uninhibited comments in his diaries of utmost importance. His must be one of the few day by day accounts of the construction of a new city in the Italian style(32).

Laparelli arrived in Malta on 28th December 1565 (33). His brief from La Vallette was an exacting one:

"After prudent and mature consideration, you shall make known your advice to us about the defenses of the Island, and you shall explain how, where, and in the shortest time possible and with the minimum of materials, this could be done."(34)

(28) This still exists, in manuscript form and is in the possession of his descendents. Quotations from the Codex (as it will be henceforth referred to) are mainly taken from Quentin Hughes's research.

(29) CODEX LAPARELLI 21-25B. As in HUGHES, The Planned City of Valletta, p.315.

(30) BOSIO, op.cit. Vol III, p.454.

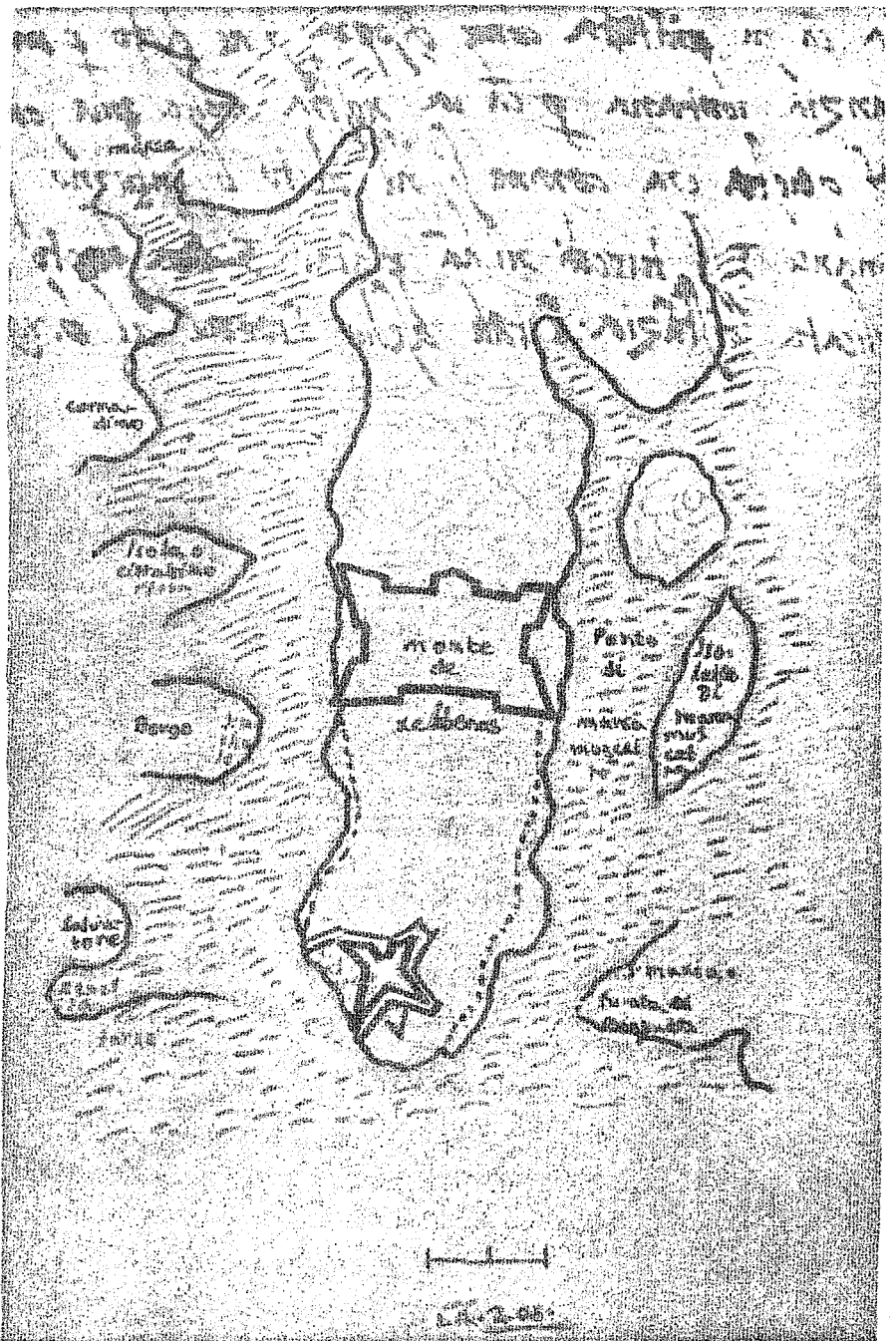
(31) ALBENGA G., article on LANCI, pp.484-485.

(32) HUGHES, Military Architecture, pp.107-108.

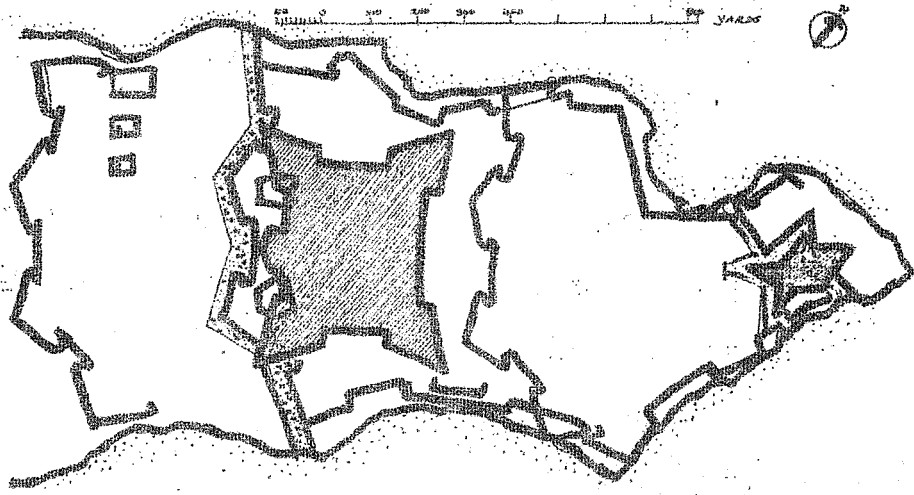
(33) "E con gran contento del Gran Maestro arrivato era anco il Captan Francesco Laparelli da Cortona Ingegniero, madatogli della fel. mem. di Pio Quarto." BOSIO, op.cit. Vol III Liber XXXIV, p.727.

(34) DE VENUTI F., Vita del Capitano F. Laparelli da Cortona, p.17.

Laparelli's suggested fortifications.



A reconstruction of the various proposals for Valletta.



Hè presented his proposals six days after his arrival (35) before the Order's Council: proposals which were not altered in any important particular in the final execution of his schemes (36).

The following is an extract from Laparelli's first report (37):

"Sara' il loco da farsi di nuovo per difesa, e guardia di questi Porti dov'è S.Ermo (38) isolato, eccetto che dove si va alla Marza (39). Voglio andar dal detto S.Ermo per far la fronte in el calcar della piu' alta parte di tal monte; dalla qual fronte al fosso di esso S.Ermo saran per diritta linea canne 500. Si torra' la pianta del monte di S.Ermo, e mostrerassi in disegno, e disegnerassi sopra essa la forma, che deve avere la nuova citta' , il che non si e' potuto fare in questi tre o quattro giorni, si e ben considerato il tutto, e dato con prestezza questo piccol parere; accio quando paresse a vs. Illustrissima accettarlo, possa preparare le cose necessarie. Vorrei per tre mesi continui 3500 Guastatori; che la meta' di essi avessino cose da portar materie dove se li ordinerà. Vorrei 100 che sapessino mettere a bel filo, bisse, manocchi, o altro che occorrse a far bastioni e muri. Saransi di muro quelle parti che non possono essere battute. Vorrei 400 altri manuali, che sapessino servire essi Maestri.

..... Dopo delli tre mesi vorrei 3000 soldati per guardar la Citta' e S.Ermo; e per un altro mese, dopo le tre primi, restassino 1000 di essi guastatori, scegliendo quelli, de' quali si ha maggior bisogno, o che son piu' atti a fare alcune cose, che li lascieran per le ultime, come saranno i lochi quase ascosi, ne' quali anche essendo assediati, si potra lavorare.

..... Saria a proposito per quest' estate ridursi in tal loco solamente con gli uomini di guerra, e le altre bocce disutili mandare altrove, che potranno al settembre tornare, e forse prima. Non parlo ora dell' arriglieria, ne' di monizioni, o vettovaglie: il che lascio a chi tocca, parlo di fabbrica per ripararsi con la muraglia, o bastioni al di fuora. La spesa della detta fabbrica nuova e' giornate 345000"

(35) BOSIO, op.cit., Vol III Liber XXXIV, p.723.

(36) CODEX LAPARELLI, p.6 as in HUGHES, Building of Malta, p.22.

(37) DE VENUTI, op.cit., p.22.

(38) St.Elmo.

(39) Marsa.

LAPARELLI'S DESIGN

In the design of the fortifications of Valletta, Laparelli shows a practical mind following the precedent of current practice. Laparelli's fortifications are pragmatic, practical and in line with the best accepted tradition. But his town planning projects are a very different matter. In his proposals for Valletta he breaks new ground, and his Codex on that new City is an enlivening combination of ideological ideas and practical experience.

Laparelli's proposals for Valletta cover four main aspects:

- the extent of the city
- the design of the fortifications
- the layout of the streets and buildings
- the utilization of labour and material. (40)

In the initial stage of the building of the fortifications there were many who criticized Laparelli's design, at times destructively. Laparelli's strongest support came from GABRIO SERBELLONI of Milan, envoy of Philip of Spain and nephew of Pius IV, prior of Hungary, military engineer and expert who visited Malta in 1566 at the age of 57. When consulted on Laparelli's plans for the new city he gave his whole hearted support, and wrote to both Pius IV and Philip II singing his praises (41).

The foundation stone of the new city was laid on the 28th March 1566; as the construction works on the fortifications began, the disputes sprang up again.

On the 3rd April 1566 the Viceroy of Sicily Don Garcia arrived in Malta. He was accompanied by several engineers and officers of high rank. These found great fault with the design, and were of the opinion that the trace of the city should be restricted to the bastions, under the idea, that the project, as then designed, was too large, and beyond the powers of the Order to execute (42).

All opposition was finally overcome, and the city began to rise on the new site. The Grand Master himself inspected the progress in the building of the fortifications daily (43). Every inhabitant of Malta between the ages of 12 and 60 years was bound to help in the building of the new city. They worked all week: Mondays to

(40) HUGHES, The Planned City of Valletta, pp.317-318.

(41) HUGHES, Fortress, pp.55-56.
SICLUNA, op.cit., p.216.

(42) PORTER, op.cit., p.486.
OCCHINI P.L., Un grande Italiano dell'500, Francesco Laparelli a Malta. Arezzo 1937, p.13, as in Hughes Building of Malta, p.13.

(43) BOSIO, op.cit., Vol III, p.749.

sundays, because speed was a matter of life and death (44). Any one who could not work had to pay one tari (45) for every day he kept away from work. Deep moats were cut down to sea level and strong walls were raised straight from the water. The approaches to the country were cleared of stones and earth, a work that proved as costly as the fortifications themselves. The space within the walls was then offered for sale. Although the land was as low as two tari per square canna, a considerable sum was obtained (46).

When La Vallette died in 1568, he was succeeded by an Italian Grand Master Pietro del Monte who had a tremendous enthusiasm for the new project. Del Monte was destined to move the convent of the Order into the new City, which he did on March 18, 1571 (47).

Laparelli's chief assistant was carefully briefed on the progress of the work and sent to Italy on a course of architectural instruction. On Cassar's return in 1568, (Girolamo Cassar being Laparelli's assistant) Laparelli left the island for good (48).

Laparelli claimed that the erection of the new city of Valletta on virgin site was a historic event, because "this was the first occasion when a city was built where previously nothing had existed". "Where people have begun to build a new city there has always been something existing - there has always been some habitation. For example Alexandria - it is impossible that there was not already a village there because it was an important commercial site. But this city on the mountain is really new." (49)

We now know better, there were many Roman cities constructed on virgin sites, and in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the warring kings of France and England built for themselves bastide towns like Aigues, Mortes and Caernarvon; their street pattern and fortified walls followed a grid plan and a regular layout deep in the heart of enemy occupied country (50).

(44) ibid., p.781.

(45) approximately equivalent to 1 cent.

(46) ZAMMIT, op.cit., p.16.

(47) PORTER, op. cit., p.168.

(48) HUGHES, Fortress, p.73.

(49) ibid., p.51.

(50) ibid., p.52.



COMPETITION

To launch our special edition of 'A-Arkitettura w Ambjent', the Editorial Board has decided to hold a competition for the best written article. This edition is expected to be printed offset on high quality paper with a colour cover - finances permitting.

Entry in this competition is regulated by the following rules:

1. Competition is open to ALL our readers.
2. Articles should have as their main theme "Architecture - Civil Engineering - Environment in the local context".
3. Articles are to be between 2,000 to 5,000 words, and ALL entries are to be typed, double space - two copies.
4. Each article has to bear a nome de plume. Each entry has to be accompanied by a sealed envelope containing entrant's name and address. The lot has to be enclosed in an envelope that has to be handed to the Department's Secretary by not later than 31st July, 1978.
5. A cash prize of £M5 will be awarded to the entry judged as winner by the judging panel.
6. All entries will be copyright of 'A-Arkitettura w Ambjent' and can be published at our discretion. Any photographic material/sketches submitted with an entry has to be in black and white.

A VALUE-BASED APPROACH TO ARCHITECTURE DECISION TAKING

Earlier this year the fourth year students in Architecture and Civil Engineering went through a process known as CONSCIENTIZATION. This is a process in which a person or group become conscious of the values which 'effectively if not quite consciously' move them and the people and institutions which surround them. When this has been done decisions become much more meaningful and much less arbitrary. The students went through the process in connection with the design of a civic centre which they were engaged in at the time.

Before going to the report on the one day session it would be useful to clarify some terms and concepts.

The definition of a value is any person, relationship or object which when freely chosen and acted upon contributes to the self's meaning and enhances its growth. A value then must be freely chosen from alternatives, the consequences of each alternative having been considered. The person must be happy with the choice and must be willing to affirm the choice publicly. Furthermore the person must act on the choice and must have acted on it recently and repeatedly i.e. his choice must be reflected in his behaviour.

Phases in Human Development

As people develop they seem to pass through phases of consciousness. Dr. Brian Hall and his associates at CEVAM (Center for the Exploration of Values and Meaning) identify four such phases, each having its own value priorities and its own world view. Passage through these phases is neither automatic, nor determined by age.

Phase One: World as Mystery/Self as Centre

Persons in the first stage of consciousness feel at the centre of a world which is capricious and beyond their control. Because of this inability to control their environment they see the world as oppressive and respond aggressively, with little sense of social responsibility. They are insecure and highly dependent on outside authorities and clear cut, rigid structures, concerning themselves with value priorities such as survival, food, shelter and physical pleasure.

Phase Two: World as Problem/Self as Belonging

Although not yet interested in or capable of standing alone a person in this phase sees his responsibility to make his own way in the world but always in a group setting. Values are redefined: while in phase one security meant satisfaction of physical needs, here it means satisfaction of social needs like belonging, success and competence. Authority and power are still viewed as external. Values, moral norms and law are seen as totally objective, requiring only unquestioning conformity.

Phase Three: World as Project and Invention/Self as Independent

Persons in phase three begin to see themselves as authority. Independent decisions replace conformity. Creativity and originality become priorities and security now comes from personal integrity. They hold institutions and authorities accountable and see social structures merely as tools. Learning becomes a self initiated and continuous enterprise. A person in this phase sees himself capable of contributing to the improvement of this world.

Phase Four: World as Mystery cared for/Self as Life Giver

The person enters this phase when he wants others to share his independence and self direction. He begins to yearn for life in a community that can relate interdependently to other communities dedicated to the realization of a global vision of world justice. Since consciousness arises from experience and global experience is always limited few people enter into this phase. At phase four security requires not only technical competence but creativity. It derives from faith that the world is not yet finished and is still in the process of creation; a spirit of adventure and a willingness to be involved in operations that are not totally controllable. It means being open to what is not yet. It means being in harmony with the life forces of the universe.

Finally it is necessary to include a note on brainstorming which is very much used in the conscientization process. In this operation a question is put to the group and individual says the first thing that comes to mind without prior thinking. During the operation the answers are written down without being discussed or questioned. Without the limitations normally present in discussions the group is much more creative. After brainstorming, which takes a very short time, the solutions presented are discussed in the normal manner.

Report on a one-day session with fourth year students and academic staff of the Faculty of Architecture conducted at the University of Malta on October 7, 1977 by Fr. Tonna.

(Number present: 20)

1. The purpose of the session was to initiate the process of designing a civic centre for the international competition organized by the World Association of Architects. The centre had to maximize the humanization of people/government relationships.
2. Participants had been asked to think of their favorite building. After sharing their choices they were introduced to the concept of value and asked to brainstorm a building picked by Fr. Tonna with the help of the CEVAM Value List. The interested person was asked to prioritize the values pulled out of his project.

3. In pairs and in groups of six, participants helped one another pull out and prioritize the values behind their particular choice of building.
4. In the large group they were asked to brainstorm the values operative in the three Malta areas chosen as sites for the projected civic centre. These were prioritized in terms of what was perceived that the local population was trying to achieve. The priorities were:
 - a. Self preservation
 - b. Security
 - c. Family
 - d. Social Affirmation
 - e. Ownership
 - f. Self centred
 - g. Self delight
 - h. Justice
5. The concept of the four phases of consciousness and the value priorities indicative of each phase was then introduced. The group realized that the people were in phase I or II while the group was in phase II or III.
6. The values behind the competition terms were pulled out and charted on the same consciousness track. The priorities were:
 - a. Human Dignity
 - b. Community Supportive
 - c. Order
 - d. Interdependence
 - e. Service
 - f. Synergy
 - g. Instrumentality
 - h. Education (knowledge)

This indicated that they were lodged in phase III or IV.

7. Here Fr. Tonna introduced participants to CEVAM's seven stages of leadership and to the all important concept that leaders should never be more than one step ahead of their followers. Leadership itself was defined as a relationship where people (leaders) influence other people (followers). The architect is a leader.
8. In four small groups participants had to prioritize the values of the project in terms of local culture as well as the consequences of the priorities chosen. Consensus was reached in the large group on this order. The priorities were:

- a. Human Dignity
- b. Community Supportive
- c. Instrumentality
- d. Education (knowledge)
- e. Self delight

9. The group then brainstormed these priorities in terms of each of the three architectural dimensions of physical needs, social demand and form. The result was a detailed set of specifications for the competitive design.

Bibliography: Leading by Discerning

An Experience in Conscientization by CEVAM/U.S.A.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (continued)

Another lack of maturity which is shown is the 'mob' decisions taken by ourselves. We don't seem to have the responsibility and sense to stand on our own feet individually, and to take the full impact of one's decisions. Democracy is a process of ruling by the decision of the majority. Its weaknesses show greatly where maturity is low, where fears are played upon; perhaps even emotions illustrated in the first paragraph. And where these feelings are manipulated skillfully, a majority decision can easily be wrong. This is a principle which reflects largely in society and particularly in our microcosm, in our course. It is essential that the right principles be the ones you act by. If these principles be blindered, self-centred and mundane, then you must be prepared to live a life without any real meaning. And if our future architects will be such fools as to act babyishly, think only for themselves, and use other people, then we have no right as a course to criticise the present environment!

One instance where one gets 'out' of himself is when he gets involved in something extracurricular, in an activity which enlarges his horizon and his contact with people. This is something that a mature student should not only be willing and able but also brave enough to do. PARTICIPATION. In our course we can clearly see who are the involved and who are not. Who are the leaders and who are the led. One very great improvement in this regard is the active and productive present editorial board of this magazine. It is time for this type of mentality to grow further. We should make the effort to get involved in the various processes around us, in the many areas - political, social, cultural, spiritual.

In the end, if we are criticising certain ideas because they counter the full development of man (exploitation, capitalism, persecution) then we should also use our present freedom to really develop ourselves.

Otherwise we might produce human architects but not real men.

book review

BY ROBERT NAUDI.

1. ARCHITECTURAL GRAPHICS BY FRANK CHING

Published by the Architectural Press (1975). Ref.No. NA 2700.
C45 (University Library).

Architectural ideas need to be impressed through the medium of graphics. Graphics is an inseparable part of the design process, and this book is formulated with this in mind. The author stresses that it is useless to conceive a good mental picture of a structure if this cannot be translated into graphical form using techniques that are capable of being "read" by the layman.

The author first describes the various equipment and materials that can be used for drawing; this includes a good description of various types of pencils and their multiplicity of uses.

There are some good chapters on drafting techniques and a useful section on drawing conventions. Another section of the book deals with symbols and lettering techniques. There is also an excellent chapter on freehand drawing, which today is assuming great importance in the architectural field due to the fact that constructed perspective drawing is time consuming.

The text is profusely illustrated and easy to follow. It will appeal mostly to draughtsmen and students of architecture. It may also, however, be found useful by anyone interested in graphical representation.

2. SITE PLANNING FOR CLUSTER HOUSING BY RICHARD UNTERMANN AND ROBERT SMALL

Published by Van Nostrand Reinhold Company (1977). Ref.No. NA 9051 4 U57 (University Library).

This is a well documented book about designing cluster houses in a variety of situations. The emphasis is on cluster housing that optimises the relationship of the housing and the site.

Cluster housing, as it is known today, is the grouping together of individual units in order to share common walls, floors, ceilings. More important is the sharing of common open spaces and common facilities.

The authors involve themselves in integrating site characteristics, user needs and environmental, technical and legal elements into each plan. They give guidelines on how site characteristics can be used to design housing forms and layouts that make the most of

the environmental and topographical features of the site. Human needs are duly emphasised and an approach is made to design housing that works, and is enjoyable to live in. All human needs - houses, roads, parking areas, service and recreational facilities, and open spaces - are considered both individually and as a whole and each is equally treated to provide an integrated arrangement.

The book also concerns itself with legal and technical considerations of site planning, as also with zoning and ownership regulations.

The book is essentially a planning manual that will be found of good value to architects, civil engineers and urban planners since the advantages and limitations of cluster housing are well defined.

3. METHODS OF ARCHITECTURAL PROGRAMMING BY HENRY SANOFF
Published by Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross Inc. (1977). Ref.No. NA 2728 S26 (University Library).

This volume deals with project control. It is meant to help the professional architect and designer to achieve control over the more practical aspects of the design projects.

The book is a tool, more than anything else, that helps the architect to provide a programme for any type of project, be it an extension to a building, the construction of a house or even the construction of an industrial estate. The methods of programming outlined are equally applicable to any of the above.

Programming provides:

- a. A method for decision making.
- b. A rational within which future discussion can be made.
- c. Greater client participation and user feedback.
- d. A log that charts the project's progress.

The author traces out a programme development which consists essentially of four phases:

- a. The Preliminary Design Phase.
- b. The Production Phase.
- c. The Construction Phase.
- d. The Evaluation Phase.

This design process is inter-related so that each phase is dependent on the other. The author is well aware of the errors involved in programming and so does his best to describe strategies to minimize them.

The book is clearly written but technically motivated so that it will probably only interest those people who are involved in project management, amongst which, managers, architects, landscape architects and planners.

PAGNA S.A.C.E.S.

Il-laqgħa Generali Straordinarja tas-S.A.C.E.S. li ltaqgħet nhar il-Gimgha 28 ta' April u nhar it-Tlieta 2 ta' Mejju 1978, wara li emendat artikli hamsa (5) u sebgha (7) ta' l-istatut, xoljiet il-kumitat il-qadim u għazlet wiehed gdid. Minn fost dawk eletti biex iservu fuq dan il-kumitat (skond l-emendi l-godda) il-Laqgħa Generali stess għazlet il-President. Il-kumitat il-gdid iltaga nhar il-Gimgha 5 ta' Mejju u għazlet dawn l-ufficjali:

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