

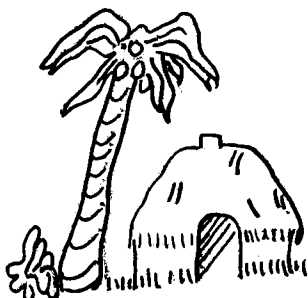
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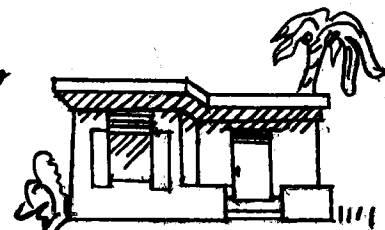
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F O R E I G N H O U S I N G

(Abstracts of Recent Publications on Foreign Housing and Planning)



Compiled by the

International Housing Activities
Office of the Administrator
U.S. Housing and Home Finance Agency.



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BUILDING RESEARCH

1. Report for the Fiscal Year 1950-51. Copenhagen: The Danish National Institute of Building Research, 1952.

The annual report of the Danish National Institute of Building Research describes in brief its organization and purpose. Capsule descriptions of the various kinds of research being carried out on house construction are included. These studies include research on floor construction, insulation of walls, floors and roofs, modular coordination, prefabrication, and economic problems, to list but a few. 26 pp.

2. Solar Charts for the Design of Sunlight and Shade for Buildings in South Africa by S. J. Richards. Pretoria: National Building Research Institute, February 1952.

It states in this booklet that in a climate with high insolation, such as that of South Africa, it is particularly desirable that careful consideration be given to building design in relation to sunlight and shade. With the aid of a solar chart and a special form of protractor described in this paper, the solution to most sunlight and shade problems can easily and quickly be worked out, using normal design drawings. Solar charts are attached to this booklet, from which it is possible to read off the angles of the sun with respect to a point on the earth's surface, or with respect to the parts of a building, at any hour and day for all places in South Africa.

The problems resulting from sunshine in buildings are also presented along with a discourse on modern architectural trends which are attempting to solve these problems. 10 pp. plus charts.

3. "Aluminium and Aluminium Alloys in Building - Part II." London: Building Research Station Digest No. 40, March 1952.

A previous Digest described the general properties of aluminum and its alloys (Reviewed in the Feb. '52 Highlights). This Digest deals with the application of these metals to a specific range of building components; it includes recommendations on the selection of alloys and on protective treatments for the components.

This pamphlet describes their uses in the construction of frames, roof trusses, joists, columns, etc.; roof coverings, fully supported or self-supporting; external wall cladding; internal wall, ceiling and partition panels; and door and window frames. 6 pp.

4. "Science and the State--VIII - Research on Building Materials" by the Director, Building Research Institute. New Delhi: The Times of India, January 17, 1952.

An article on the type of research being carried on in India by the Central Building Research Institute. It states that there is a great shortage of building materials of all types with the quality of many of the materials not being satisfactory; e.g. wastage arising out of faulty methods of production as in the case of bricks, is extensive.

In order to study this and other important aspects of building, a Building Research Unit was set up at Roorkee in 1947 as a nucleus of what is now the Central Building Research Institute. Some of the research projects now under way include the following: a study of fired brick for purposes of trying to obtain a more uniform product; a study of rectangular roofing tiles prepared out of soil now being tested for durability under varying weather conditions; a study of stabilizing earth for use in house construction. This latter study is considered very important in view of the fact that so many village houses are made of mud. Attempts are being made to add some ingredients such as cement, bituminous emulsions and similar substances which would keep off water from the soil particles. Some experiments have been carried out which show the possibility of using some industrial waste for this purpose. Other studies are also being performed on the strength of lime-surkhi (powdered bricks) under different conditions, and on the ex-foliation of vermiculite.

When fully developed and housed in a new building now under construction, the Institute's activities will cover engineering and structural aspects of buildings and such subjects as the effect of mechanization and prefabrication on the technique of construction and factors concerned with comfort.

5. "Un Nouveau Chantier Experimental Groupe Du Pont De Sévres" (Experimental Apartment Houses at Pont De Sévres, Paris) by J. Debelvalet. Paris: Cahiers Du Centre Scientifique Et Technique Du Batiment, No. 14. (In French)

This report contains a complete technical study on constructions now being carried out in Boulogne-Billancourt at the Pont de Sévres (near Paris). The construction method used in building this 200 dwelling unit project is, in the main, a form of the tilt-up technique. The article describes the various stages of construction, and especially the special forms systems with the help of which the building site has reached an industrialized speed. 16 pp.

HOUSING COSTS

6. "The Costs of Native Housing--Present Day Costs of Brick Houses at Vereeniging." By A. L. Glen. Pretoria: Bulletin No. 7, National Building Research Institute, December 1951. pp. 38-52.

In an attempt to reduce the costs of individual native dwellings, the costs of 1,000 houses at Sharpeville, Vereeniging were analyzed and modified according to prices prevailing in April/May 1951. This article shows the cost breakdown to consist of: (1) the individual costs per house for materials, labor and overhead; (2) the cost of each constructional element making up the house (foundation, superstructure, roofwork, etc.). The analysis shows that no striking cost reduction can be made by reducing the cost of any single constructional element, and that appreciable saving can only be made by reducing the cost of any single constructional element, and that appreciable saving can also be made by conducting a continuous housing program without any stoppages or breaks in the work.

HOUSING FINANCE

7. "Subsidies in Perspective--I - Cheap Housing." London: The Economist, March 8, 1952. pp. 570-571.

An article discussing the advantages and disadvantages of employing the subsidy as a method for achieving "cheap housing." Many local authorities, it states, have sought to spread the excess of cost over subsidies of their postwar housing by pooling the rents of prewar and postwar houses, by using prewar surpluses on their housing accounts, or by charging deficits on their housing accounts to the rates.

However, it goes on to state that if local authorities are to make any progress towards a realistic rent policy, they will need firm government support. The article makes the point that the notion of what is a "fair" rent may have doubled, but nevertheless, it is still far below the true increase in housing costs. It shows that British standards of housing are high, but they will not remain high if the average tenant expects that the rent he pays should absorb a diminishing proportion of his income.

The author of this article questions what the true purpose of subsidies are, what the limit is that can be afforded, and how they should be distributed. He shows that some have suggested that the subsidies should be stopped, and that rents should be allowed to rise to their economic level with assistance to needy tenants from a national subsidy pool.

Three possible solutions to outright subsidies are proposed. First, the growth of the housing subsidies must be checked by allowing an appreciable part of the increases in housing cost (which are themselves only a reflection of increases in incomes) to fall upon rents. Secondly, the number of subsidized houses must be reduced by encouraging private building. Thirdly, the local authorities must seriously consider every suggestion that promises a more economical design for houses and preserves all essential amenities in a more compact form with less circulation space.

8. "The Financing of Housing." Amsterdam: Quarterly Review No. 1, 1952. pp. 3-13.

An interesting article describing the housing shortage in the Netherlands, the problems involved in remedying the shortage and possible financing schemes which can be undertaken to stimulate house construction.

The main reasons for the present housing shortage are attributed to the fact that many dwellings were destroyed during the war and the fact that no construction took place. Rent control has influenced the housing market also by making ownership of rental properties less profitable. The article estimates the number of new dwelling units required between now and 1964 to be 716,000 or about 55,000 new dwellings each year.

HOUSING SITUATION

9. "Housing Problems and Policies in Latin America." Geneva: International Labour Review, March 1952. pp. 348-378.

Housing remains a major problem in the Latin-American countries although important measures have been taken, particularly since the second world war, to improve housing conditions. This article surveys the progress made in the various countries of the region during recent years and concludes with an outline of the elements involved in a solution of the problem. Some of the problems discussed are the framework of housing policy, workers' houses, provision of housing by employers, government action, the financing of private housing, public housing programs, "aided self-help housing," the problem of building materials, and technical assistance.

10. Hurricane Housing Programme--1951. Issued by the Hurricane Housing Committee with the Authority of Government. Kingston: The Government Printer, 1952.

Great Britain promised assistance to the extent of 2,250,000 pounds for permanent re-housing schemes following the hurricane of August 1951, part of it being a free grant and part of it being a loan. The re-housing plans were drawn up with three main purposes in mind:- a) that the maximum number of people whose houses were damaged or destroyed should be assisted in a way which will be of permanent benefit to them; b) that the funds available should be wisely directed and adequately controlled; and c) that the loan should be repaid. The purpose of this booklet is to describe the various schemes proposed for achieving the above objectives.

There are four authorities concerned in this re-housing program. The Hurricane Housing Committee was given the task of preparing the schemes for the consideration of the Government. The Hurricane Housing Organization has the task of ordering and preparing building materials and supervising or undertaking construction work. The Tribunal has the task of sifting all applications. The Agricultural Loan Societies Board is the authority for making and collecting the loans.

The bulk of the housing is planned as one-room units; larger houses being unfeasible at this time not only because it would have meant the provision of fewer houses, but because if larger houses had been provided, the greater monthly payments required would have excluded from the scheme the poorer people who most need the assistance. It is pointed out in this booklet that the design of the houses to be constructed under the approved schemes is such that an additional room or rooms can conveniently be added later, and if repayment of the loan part of the schemes is found to be satisfactory, the government intends to consider schemes to encourage and assist householders to construct additional rooms.

Good descriptions of all of the major features of both the rural and urban housing schemes are included in this publication along with the policies governing these schemes. 50 pp.

11. The First Five Year Plan (A Draft Outline). New Delhi: Government of India Planning Commission, July 1951.

A discussion and explanation of the new Five-Year Plan (1952-1957) propounded by the Indian Administration. The plan has many objectives: to solve the problem caused by the shortage of raw materials, essential consumer goods, and housing; to fight the high and rising prices and the growing cost of living; to rehabilitate the persons displaced by partition; to utilize social resources to suppress blackmarketing and profiteering; to readjust the economy; and to develop the country. The problems it sets out to tackle are immediate.

The section on housing shows that in both the urban and rural areas, there is an acute insufficiency of low-income housing with the lack of proper planning producing a haphazard development and construction of small, ill-ventilated, dingy dwellings. The program for housing is presented in terms of housing finance, reduction in housing costs, research, aid to private enterprise, and the roles of the national and state housing boards. 295 pp.

12. Sixth Annual Report 1950-51. Belfast: Northern Ireland Housing Trust, 1951.

This report of the Northern Ireland Housing Trust describes the progress made in the construction of housing projects in Northern Ireland to date. It states that schemes have now been completed in eleven Borough and Urban Districts. In another twenty towns, building is in progress, and in sixteen of these a substantial number of houses have been completed. As a result, the report shows that the housing need in many towns has become comparatively less than that still existing in Belfast. Also discussed are the house types, rents, costs, technical staff, and housing management. There are twelve plates included in this report depicting the various housing projects now completed, including some "Old People's Dwellings" at Garrickfergus. 28 pp.

13. "Some Aspects of the Housing Problem in Northern Ireland" by R. F. McKeown. Royal Sanitary Institute Journal, June 1951. pp. 750-755.

In this paper the author describes some of the social problems which Northern Ireland housing authorities have to meet. He describes the history and background to the present situation, the rural picture in terms of the large farms, the small holdings, and the workers' cottages, the urban picture, and the slum clearance problem.

The author shows that a large proportion of the population lives in scattered rural areas or small towns where there is considerable unemployment and consequent poverty. Small farmers, owning very small uneconomic holdings and dilapidated dwellings, refuse to leave their property while the younger generations continue to drift away from the land and older dwellings are frequently abandoned. Slum clearance, he states, will require heavily subsidized new houses, an exchange of tenants scheme, or purchase and renovation of existing property by housing authorities. The Northern Ireland Government, recognizing the need for cheaper houses, has agreed to some sacrifice of amenities and size.

14. "Housing in Greater Paris" by P. Grunebaum-Ballin. Covent Gardens: Town and Country Planning, May 1952. pp. 215-218.

This authoritative account, by the President of the Public Housing Office of the Department of the Seine, of the housing situation in Greater Paris is a reminder of the similarity of the problems everywhere

created by the excessive urban concentration. In addition, Paris has its own special problems like the need of houses to let, the dislike of high flats, shortage of housing sites, and the problem of land acquisition.

15. Building: A Social Service by George Lowthian. London: Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers.

A small booklet published by a building union describing the importance of building in the over-all framework of living. It states that the stages in the progress of civilization have been, and are, determined by progress in building. Housing, it claims, is the most urgent social problem in every city and town; that the provision of six million new houses, at least, is required if the working people of England are to have ordinary decency and comfort in their homes. 8 pp.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

16. "The Excellent Experiments" by Humphrey Carver. Ottawa: Community Planning Review, May 1952. pp. 49-53.

An extensive review of Clarence S. Stein's recent book, Toward New Towns for America, with poignant comments on the book's major points as they apply to the Canadian scene. Carver shows that perhaps the most remarkable feature of Mr. Stein's achievement is not the originality of his ideas but the fact that he managed to get them carried out. He shows that the communities built under Stein's general guidance are beautiful solutions to the practical problems of domestic economy and family life; that as works of art they are in the tradition of the Garden City movement, brought up-to-date to fit the motor age.

The article points out that the value of these great experiments in city planning is in their unabashed search for excellence. "In the hurried efforts to expand our cities we continually have to compromise with mediocrity, to tolerate the adequate, to accept the standards of the bureaucrat. Housing administrators and public officials have indeed been at a great disadvantage because the only standards they have been given to work with have been minimum standards. This breeds a habit of mind that scorns the excellent and retreats from leadership."

The article concludes on a note of anxiety by stating that it is somewhat frightening to realize that, during Canada's great period of urban expansion, there is yet no effective mobilization of forces with the kind of vision which Clarence Stein has provided.

17. "Site Selection in Non-European Housing Estate Layouts" by D. M. Calderwood. Pretoria: Bulletin No. 7, National Building Research Institute, December 1951. pp. 7-13.

The importance of site selection for low cost housing estates is discussed, with reference to cost reduction and to the creation of environment. Important aspects dealt with are: zoning, taking legislation into account; health considerations; site location in relation to transportation and services; topography and soil conditions; social surveys, revealing the number of people likely to be housed, rent-paying capacity and other factors; and, in conclusion, a discussion of the area and shape of the site. A check list is appended to this paper on the various items to be considered in site selection of an estate layout.

18. "The Planning of Non-European Residential Areas in South Africa" by D. M. Calderwood. Pretoria: Bulletin No. 7, National Building Research Institute, December 1951. pp. 14-37.

It is pointed out in this article that the provision of amenities in residential areas is most important if the planned areas are to function properly. It shows that the economies of a layout are very dependent upon the density achieved in the plan, but in arriving at higher densities, it stresses that amenities must not be reduced. A good plan is the balance of economics and the creation of a good environment. The amenities are discussed in terms of housing, schooling and educational provisions, outdoor recreational facilities, indoor social and cultural amenities, shopping and commercial buildings, health provisions, and roads and access ways. Additional town planning data are appended to this article.

19. "Land Uses and Planned Uses" by Professor W. G. Holford. London: Town and Country Planning Association National Conference, October 4, 1951.

A paper presented to the Town and Country Planning Association's symposium on "Planning and the People." Prof. Holford shows how the thinking in the field of planning has progressed. He states that there have been two phases to planning. The first phase was the inquiry into land use, with laws being passed to control its future uses. "Parliament accepted the unconventional mandate, and made statutory this self-imposed discipline. Land was thereafter restricted (at least in theory) to its present use value."

The second phase, Prof. Holford calls the battle between advisors-- both administrative and technical; the fight no longer being against sheer ignorance and apathy. It is now accepted, he shows, that in order to achieve improvements in sanitation, public health, housing conditions, community facilities, etc., some form of combined thinking or planning must take place. But in that each type of improvement has its own

partisans, oftentime their claims conflict. And since, says Prof. Holford, a truly combined operation has to have a program, it is not sufficient to know that all the different needs are interrelated; their relative importance has to be assessed as well.

Urban reclamation, he shows, is in its infancy as a social technique. "We know next to nothing about the rates of obsolescence and of the measures that could be taken to slow down the processes of blight and decay and to prevent stagnation. We are only just beginning to study the multiple uses of urban land, the rationalization of expansion space for factories, the multi-purpose open space, the combination of school and civic auditoria-gymnasias-parking places."

The author concludes with the statement that there is still no alternative way of proceeding; but that it is quite clear that we are far from being able to calculate what our urban land requirements will be over the next 20 years. 5 pp.

20. "How to Make Regional Planning Effective" by Peter Self. Covent Gardens: Town and Country Planning, May 1952. pp. 212-214.

This paper states that the great defect in the administration of town and country planning in Britain today is that there is no proper machinery for regional planning. It shows that the region is unmistakably the proper unit for planning in its social and economic aspects, for guiding the distribution of industry and population, for determining the proper course of urban growth and redevelopment.

The writer of this article holds that the regional machinery inside Ministries cannot meet the necessity for democratic and effective regional planning. To make regional planning a reality, he suggests the creation of a set of elected regional councils, who would be responsible for the many services which now must be operated at that level.

The writer also suggests three constructive proposals: (a) the creation of a joint planning board (with executive powers) in appropriate areas, (b) the setting up of an advisory body, comprising representatives of government departments, local authorities, industry, and commerce to consider problems relating to the implementation of the London plans, and (c) the establishment of an auxiliary authority in the form of a government-financed regional housing association, which would build houses wherever needed within the region and which would also supply expert assistance to the smaller local authorities.

21. A Master Plan for Cwmbran New Town by Minoprio & Spencely and P. W. Macfarlane. London: The Cwmbran Development Corporation, March 1951.

The Cwmbran Development Corporation was set up on November 24, 1949, charged with the duty of developing the town and providing housing with

proper social and commercial facilities mainly for those employed in the existing and proposed industry sited in the valley.

The designated area already contains a population of some 13,000 and manufacturing industries employing over 6,000. The principal problem, therefore, has been to envisage how the existing development--about one-third of that proposed for the New Town may, with a minimum of disturbance, be combined with the new development so as to create economically a convenient, safe and attractive town.

This plan and report submitted by the planning consultants indicate the proposals for the zoning of, and the principal communications within, the designated area together with the acreages, populations and densities recommended, and for certain ancillary proposals outside the designated area which are considered necessary for the proper development of Cwmbran. The plan proposes seven residential areas, each with its own neighborhood center, linked together by a road.

This publication discusses all of the major facilities and land uses considered in the drawing up of the plan. 47 pp.

22. Small Towns--Their Social and Community Problems by L. E. White. London: The National Council of Social Service, February 1951.

The discussion in this booklet is based on a survey begun during the war with the aim of assessing the importance of small towns in England, their decline, growth, and the quality of their social life. The author describes the advantages and disadvantages of small towns as urban units and attempts to evaluate their importance in terms of future planning.

The author concludes that there is an ever growing need for dispersal. He points out that while not all small towns are suitable to receive further population and industry, nevertheless, there are a very considerable number in all parts of the country whose only fault is that they are just too small to function as satisfactory units in our modern society. Their great need, he claims, is an influx of new people, new industries, and the prosperity and amenities which together these can create and sustain. 63 pp.

See also "Housing Situation" pp. 4, 5, 6 and 7 for additional studies of town and country planning.