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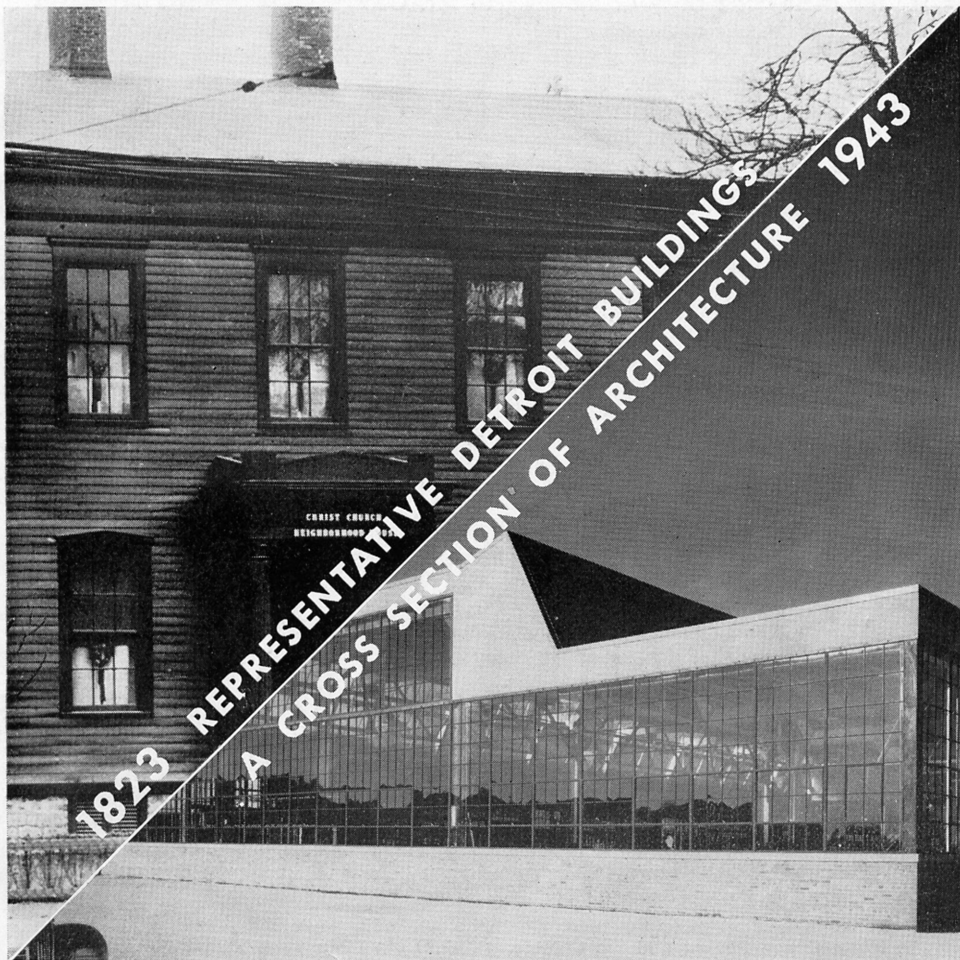

REPRESENTATIVE DETROIT BUILDINGS
A CROSS SECTION OF ARCHITECTURE, 1823-1943

A HEALTHY community, like an individual, should be able both to create for the future and at the same time to preserve what is best of the past. The City of Detroit looks forward hopefully at the present time to a master plan of its future development. But the good old architecture of Detroit's past is disappearing so rapidly that architects interested in the matter approached the Art Institute to suggest an archives of Detroit architecture, in which there might be preserved by photographs and in the architect's original designs at least a cross section of our architectural history. The present essay offers the commentary on an exhibit of photographs and architects' original drawings of Detroit architecture, 1823-1943, assembled and catalogued by Mr. Hawkins Ferry. We are indebted to Prof. Emil Lorch for his advice and assistance, to Mr. Ferry for his gift of photographs and for his enthusiastic study of the field, to Mr. George D. Mason and Mr. Louis Kamper for the gift of their original drawings for the archives and for information supplied in personal interviews, and to the late Mr. Albert Kahn for information and a gift of photographs. Mr. Ferry also wishes to express his gratitude for assistance given by the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library and the Detroit Historical Society.

The numbers in the text refer to the label numbers in the exhibition. The figured buildings will be found on the last four pages.

E. P. RICHARDSON.

Any Detroiter interested in American architecture needs only to look about him on his way from house to office to discover a veritable museum of architecture. There is an opportunity for a student to examine at first hand representative buildings from the Post-Colonial to the Modern Period. A familiarity with these examples can have many advantages not to be found in the study of inaccessible buildings of a more remote period. The architectural monuments of Europe were built under social, economic, and climatic conditions alien to North America. Building techniques also have undergone a complete revolution since the Renaissance. It would seem that a prospective architect could solve future building problems better if he had a realistic knowledge of past architectural practice in his own locality.

The buildings of Detroit erected since the fire of 1805 tell a story of American architecture since that date. It is the story of the evolution of building techniques accompanied by changing aesthetic concepts. A series of attempts to adapt European architectural styles to American buildings has been followed by the simplification and final elimination of these stylistic traits in favor of a more organic aesthetic concept. Amid the welter of cornices, cupolas, and brackets are discernible those germinating notions of flexibility, simplicity and sincerity that are the keystones of modern movement. The transition from the derivative to the modern is seen to be less abrupt than has been frequently supposed. Finally, in modern buildings, the identity between the appearance of a building and its function and

NOTE: The montage on the cover shows the Sibley House on Jefferson Avenue built in the late eighteen forties; and the Chrysler (Dodge) Half-Ton Truck Plant, Export Building, by Albert Kahn, 1938.

structure becomes complete. The development of new building methods in steel, concrete, wood, and glass has given architecture a greater flexibility and a new beauty characteristic of our time. Freed from the handicraft artisan tradition and abetted by the machine, the architect is now in a better position to provide for the individual and social needs of man. Today modern architecture stands ready to transform our cities and our lives.

Let us look back, then, at the already ageing structures of Detroit to find the key to an understanding of the present. Perhaps in opening the album of pressed flowers to examine blooms that achieved their perfection many years ago, we may discover a record of that striving for perfection that underlies the evolutionary process.

The old State Capitol Building, built in 1823, a really fine example of Post-Colonial building, has unfortunately been demolished. Its prostyle portico, Ionic columns, pediment, and Wren-like tower compare favorably with their Eastern prototypes. Still standing in Detroit, however, are the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul of 1844 by Francis Letourno (2) and the fine barracks at Fort Wayne, attributed to Lieut. M. C. Meigs. An example of the Greek Revival style with a lingering Colonial simplicity is the Sibley house of the late eighteen forties (see cover), now the Christ Church Neighborhood House, with its Doric columns, frieze and cornice (1).

One of the first really important architects in Detroit was Gordon W. Lloyd (1832-1904). He was born in Cambridge, England and, although much of his youth was spent in Canada, he completed his education in England and entered the office of his uncle, Ewan Christian, who was at that time practicing in the vernacular of the Gothic Revival. Coming to Detroit in 1858, he set up a practice and was soon adorning Detroit with a series of picturesque and charming Gothic Revival monuments. Christ Church was built in 1861 (3), Central Methodist Episcopal Church in 1867 (4), the Samuel T. Douglas house, "Little Cote," on Grosse Ile in 1865, and the Sidney T. Miller house (Figure 1) on Jefferson Avenue in 1864 (5). The Miller house was built of Trenton limestone left over from the construction of Christ Church, while a quarry on Grosse Ile supplied limestone for the Douglas house. The fragile delicacy of the Fort Street Presbyterian Church, built by O. and A. Jordan in 1855, with its lacy tracery, pinnacles and spire, contrasts with the boldness and the solidity of the Lloyd churches.

The expansion of commerce after the Civil War brought with it a tide of rapidly-acquired fortunes. The architects of the period, searching for ways of expressing the new luxury in terms of architecture, naturally focused their eyes on Paris, the center of elegance. Lack of adequate drawings and photographs of Parisian buildings forced them to rely for their inspiration on two of the best known and most recent buildings in the French capital: the new wing of the Louvre and the Opera House. The task of adapting the exuberant and intricate style of these two public buildings to American residential and commercial buildings presented almost insurmountable difficulties from the start. That Detroit architects produced some commendable results speaks well for their ingenuity.

Although the French style seems to have predominated locally, the Gothic Revival and the Italian villa style, both previously developed in England, continued to influence the architects. The Ransom Gillis house of 1876 on Alfred Street

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is a reminder of the Italian Gothic style which Ruskin so extolled (7). The more capriciously inclined might indulge in a Swiss chalet type, as exemplified by the John Dyar house on Alfred Street (8). Architectural magazines representing these various styles caused considerable confusion and frequently resulted in a curious blend of elements.

Gordon W. Lloyd was not one to ignore the changing architectural fashions. His Governor Henry B. Baldwin house of 1877 (demolished in 1942) showed French influence, with its portico of superimposed paired columns. The string-courses and the joined lintels, with their incised carving and reduced pediments, gave the facade a homogeneity and originality that is not altogether unpleasing. The wide hall, leading to a grand staircase, was flanked by four large rooms with simple plaster walls and small marble mantles. One cannot but feel that the high-ceilinged rooms, with their generous bay windows, were most suitable for the formal receptions which took place there; for it was here that President and Mrs. Rutherford B. Hayes and General W. T. Sherman were received, surrounded by Governor Baldwin's collection of oil paintings (9). The John S. Newberry house on Jefferson Avenue, built by Lloyd in 1877, although somewhat similar in style to the Baldwin house, favors an asymmetrical composition dominated by a tower (10).

In Lloyd's Newberry Building of 1879, originally on Griswold Street, the French vocabulary has been applied to a six-storied commercial building with a somewhat telescopic effect. The increased window area, however, shows an improvement over previous commercial structures (11). The Parker Building of 1883, noteworthy for its entirely cast-iron front, foreshadows present-day prefabrication. The increasing fussiness of detail, characteristic of the eighties, gives the wall surface a playful all-over pattern of light and shadow not visible in Lloyd's earlier work (12).

On New Year's eve in 1886 occurred the biggest fire in Detroit's history. Families drove their sleighs along icy streets to watch the blaze of the D. M. Ferry Seed Co. Mr. Mason, of Mason and Rice, had gone to Boston to make a first-hand study of mill construction before erecting the warehouse in 1879, but quantities of stored seeds were easily ignited by the flames. When a new building was erected by Gordon W. Lloyd, slow-burning mill construction was used with solid oak columns. On the exterior continuous piers, generous fenestration, and restrained use of ornament marked a new advance in commercial architecture (13).

The use of Romanesque ornament on a commercial building appears on the Campau Building of 1883 by Mortimer L. Smith (demolished) (14). Mortimer L. Smith (1840-1896) was born at Jamestown, N. Y. He was educated at Oberlin and Sandusky, Ohio, and came to Detroit in 1855 with his father, Shelden Smith, who was also an architect. They formed the firm of Shelden Smith and Son from 1861 to 1868. Upon his father's death, Smith worked alone for a while until he joined with his son, Fred L. Smith, to form the firm of Mortimer L. Smith and Son. The firm was responsible for many of the principal business blocks and buildings of the day, including the old Newcomb Endicott Building on Woodward. Another side of Mr. Smith's nature is revealed by his winter scenes and sketches. His masterpiece was a picture of Niagara Falls in the winter of 1881.

Mr Smith's venture in the field of domestic architecture is best represented by the Charles Ducharme house (Figure 2) of 1869, on Jefferson Avenue. This is an example of the Italian villa style. The tower and the round-arched windows derive from Italian sources, although the Mansard roof is of French origin. The large hallway is dominated by a grandiose stairway done in black walnut and curly

maple. An unsupported flight of over twenty steps sweeps to the landing from which the stairway continues in two flights. The long drawing-room on the left of the hall is terminated by tall French mirrors above the mantel. To the right of the hall is the sitting-room; while the rear of the house is reserved for the library and the dining-room, which overlook the garden. Still preserved in the house are a black walnut dining set made in Detroit in the exuberant style of the Second Empire, with hunting subjects in high relief (15).

One of the finest Detroit buildings showing the French influence is James Anderson's City Hall of 1871 (16). George D. Mason remembers as a boy walking on the scaffolding when the walls were being plastered. He returned home thrilled at having climbed to the cupola. The people in the streets, he explained to his parents, looked like flies.

Mr. Mason had come to Detroit with his parents in 1870 from Syracuse, N. Y. By 1873 he had finished his education in the public schools. His mechanical ingenuity soon brought him a job at S. S. Wormer and Sons, Michigan Machinery Depot. Mr. Wormer was on the board of the Detroit Lithographic Co. When their plates for the diploma of the State Agricultural Society were burned, Mr. Wormer, recognizing young Mason's ability at drawing, asked him to design a new diploma, which he did with great success (17). It was Mr. Wormer who gave Mason the idea of being an architect. When the question came up whether to enter Lloyd's office or Smith's, Mr. Wormer favored the latter on the grounds that he could design good cornices and Lloyd could not. Mason tried working in Smith's office one summer; but in 1873 he entered the new office of Henry T. Brush, as he thought he had a better chance there. He worked nine months without pay.

In 1875 in Brush's office Mason worked on full-scale drawings of the old Public Library and on drawings for the George O. Robinson house on Cass. Because of the necessity for economy, the Library was completed with a wood instead of a stone entrance and without the dome. The indeterminate style was a loose adaptation of Renaissance forms (18 and 19). The Robinson house is basically the bracketed Italian villa type, although the details are clearly debased French. But what Brush lost in correctness of detail he gained in originality. The attenuated columns, the front archway with its concentric cornice, the pagoda-like cupola with its iron cresting, and the bay windows are part of a consistent whole that is the architectural counterpart of the watered satin and velvet Worth dress, the cameo earrings with their gold spangles, and the ivory-handled silk parasol (20).

While in Brush's office, Mason worked on the competitive drawings for the waterworks building on East Jefferson. However, J. E. Sparks won the competition. In 1878 Mr. Mason joined in partnership with Zachariah Rice, a family friend from Oswego, N. Y. Their first job was a stable for Thomas Berry of Berry Brothers. Thomas W. Palmer gave them an office in the Merrill Block and agreed that they should have five hundred dollars the first year whether they made anything or not. However, they made eight hundred dollars. In 1879-80 they did the Central Market Building in Cadillac Square, employing solid brick walls and wood joints (demolished).

One of their more pretentious early residences was the Joseph H. Berry house in Grosse Pointe (demolished in 1942) (21) which was erected in 1882 in the Queene Anne style. Norman Shaw had brought about this revival of indigenous Renaissance forms in England in which a predilection was shown for carved barge-boards, half-timbered effects, shingled areas and heavy mullions. A great freedom of plan was observed, possibly due to a less formal social life. In the Berry house, rooms were arranged to take advantage of the beautiful lake exposure

and a formal garden on the south side; while the staircase, with its stained glass window, dominated the less desirable northern exposure. The paneling was in mahogany, black walnut, and several varieties of oak, supplemented by elaborate woodcarving and parquet floors (22).

At about this time an architectural titan loomed on the eastern horizon in the person of Henry Hobson Richardson of Boston. Reacting against the architectural potpourri of the period, he turned toward the rugged simplicity of the Southern French Romanesque. Here the deep reveal of arches produced sharply-defined shadows, and rough-hewn masonry was formed into solid masses. What an antidote for the phrenetic, tortured surfaces of the previous period! Although Richardson was one of the first Americans to receive his training at the Beaux Arts in Paris, his work could scarcely be considered the result of this education—but rather the output of a highly original and forceful mind. He was one of the first to study his buildings from all four sides with a real understanding of three-dimensional architectural masses. He also laid special stress on the texture and color of materials. Thus it is apparent that he was truly a forerunner of the moderns. The influence of Richardson's innovations was enormous; and, almost overnight, America universally accepted the Romanesque Revival. In many cases the superficial earmarks of the style were adopted without a real understanding of it, but frequently the new theories were employed with success.

Richardson himself is responsible for two structures in Detroit: the Bagley Fountain of 1885 and the Bagley Memorial Armory of 1886. The former shows his fondness for Byzantine ornament and compact design (23). In the latter he has striven for a unity of design by binding together several floors under three large arches. The concentration of support in the piers marks an improvement in the design of commercial structures (24). The influence of this building is discernible in the nearby building at Randolph and Congress by Rogers and MacFarlane, dated 1888 (25).

The T. W. Palmer Block of 1894 shows the influence of Monadnock Block in Chicago and is one of Mason and Rice's most distinguished buildings. It is among the last mill construction buildings with solid masonry bearing walls (26 and 27). In the Wm. Reid & Co. Building, built around 1890 (now the Welt Paper Co.), the pier disappears as a supporting member; and the wall becomes merely a protective curtain of glass and brick. It is one of Gordon W. Lloyd's last buildings and shows how far he had gone from the Newberry Building (28). It is only a step further to the fully-articulated steel skeleton skyscraper as represented by the Majestic Building, built by the famous Chicagoan, D. H. Burnham, in 1895 (29). One cannot overlook the fact that all of this group of commercial buildings are in the Romanesque style. A feeling for texture is displayed in the interesting brickwork. It is a curious paradox that the skyscraper should have been evolved from the early work of Richardson, a man who showed little interest in structural innovation.

The public and private buildings of the period are more characteristically Richardsonian than the commercial buildings. Mason and Rice's First Presbyterian Church of 1889 may be said to stem directly from Richardson's Trinity Church in Boston, with its Greek cross plan, its massive square lantern supported on four huge arches, and its polychromy. The Detroit church, however, has a more compact design; and the four arches have a greater solidity. Its Lake Superior sandstone produces a different effect from the puddingstone of Trinity (30).

Other excellent Richardsonian buildings by Mason and Rice are the old YMCA of 1886, and the railroad stations in Walkerville and Kingsville, Ontario, both dated 1888 (31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36).

Several additional successful buildings of the period which show a considerable Richardson influence are: the Union Station, begun in 1889 by Isaac Taylor of St. Louis, Mo. (37) and the old Post Office of 1890-97 (demolished); the old University of Detroit High School building of 1891, on Jefferson Avenue, by Gordon W. Lloyd (39); the Detroit Club of 1891, by Wilson Eyre of Philadelphia (40); and the old Art Museum of 1887, by James Balfour of Hamilton, Ontario. The last named architect was the winner of a competition. The final selection by Senator McMillan was not challenged, although there was some criticism at the time of the choice of a Canadian architect (41).

Gordon W. Lloyd was not as successful in his design of the David Whitney house of 1894 as he had been in his University of Detroit building. The Romanesque design of the palatial house of Colorado granite is confused by too many unrelated elements (42). The A. L. Stephens house of 1890 by Mason and Rice was a somewhat more determinate example of Romanesque design (demolished) (43).

In 1879 the late Albert Kahn (1869-1942) arrived in Detroit from Europe, oldest of six children of an impoverished rabbi. He had been born in Rhaunen, Westphalia, Germany. He soon became an office boy in an architect's office. Good luck shone upon him when Julius Melchers offered to give him drawing lessons on Sundays and, convinced of his ability, got him an architectural job in the office of Mason and Rice. Starting on January 1, 1885, the sixteen-year-old boy worked nine months without pay before he began receiving $30.00 a month.

In a few years he made the designs for some of the Mason and Rice's larger residences: notably the Gilbert Lee house on Ferry and John R. Streets and the Charles A. DuCharme house on East Jefferson, both dated 1888. He had made a trip to Chicago and was strongly influenced by certain residential work which he saw there. When I asked him whether he designed the carving over the entrance of the Lee house, he replied, "Yes, that's mine. It looks like a disease, doesn't it?" A look at this charming entry with its deep reveals and crisp detail would seem to discredit Mr. Kahn's modest opinion of his early creative talent (44).

The design and composition of the house as a whole is excellent. A wide dining room window is separated from the window above it by a metal spandrel, both being crowned by an elliptical arch. This forms a suitable vertical accent for the dominant bay. Generous window areas seem to have been designed for the convenience of the interior rooms as well as for exterior appearances (45). There is a considerable freedom in the interior plan, the rooms being grouped around a large hallway, in which are featured a monumental fireplace and a stairway to the east, with the usual stained glass window at the landing. Fireplaces of great richness and variety of design are found in the principal rooms. The Richardsonian living-room mantel is executed in Italian onyx with a carved mantelpiece of bird's eye maple (46); the grille above the dining room mantel is a choice example of *art nouveau* design; while an upstairs mantel with a wide expanse of tile facing possesses a modernity far in advance of its time (47). All the hardware, the grilles, and the carving in the house were specially designed in the greatest detail, most of the work showing the influence of William Morris and of the *art nouveau* (48).

The frame houses of this period represent an outgrowth of the Queen Anne tradition. In the hands of Richardson and a score of Eastern architects most of the derivative detail was eliminated. The houses indicate a study of simple masses and interesting contrasts of material, especially stone and shingles.

The Charles L. Freer house (Figure 3) on Ferry Avenue, built in the late eighties by Wilson Eyre of Philadelphia, is one of the finest monuments of the period in Detroit. In it there is a recognizable transition from the Queen Anne toward the modern. There is a departure from fixed architectural traditions and a search for an architecture that organically expresses patterns of living. Witness the charming library with its corner fireplace and built-in fireside seats or the upstairs sitting-room with its sunny exposure, its built-in cabinets, and adjoining porch. This porch, cut out of the corner of the house, seems to defy the traditional solidity of walls. Then again, the skilfully designed stair well gives a feeling of three dimensional spaciousness to the house by penetrating the ordinarily clearly defined boundaries between floors (49).

There could be no better evidence of Mr. Freer's artistic discernment nor a better background for his outstanding collection of oriental art and fine Whistler paintings. The plaster walls were stippled in soft colors to form a background for pictures, which were illuminated by specially designed fixtures. The library was virtually a reliquary for a Chinese vase which stood in an oval niche above the fireplace. Olive-tinted walls harmonized with the vase, and unobtrusive built-in furniture left the eye free to concentrate on the venerated object.

An annex to the house contained Mr. Freer's art gallery, his library, and the celebrated Peacock Room, James McNeill Whistler's venture into interior décor. Originally executed in 1876 for Frederick Leyland in London, the room is now in the Freer Art Gallery in Washington. In Washington, as formerly in Detroit, the bric-a-brac shelves contain Chinese porcelains, and above the mantle is Whistler's *Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine.*

The firm of Mason and Rice did several frame buildings illustrating the same tendencies in design as the Freer house. Skillful massing and interesting contrast in materials characterize the Belle Isle Police Station of 1893 (50). The trend toward simplicity was followed in Mason and Rice's large resort hotels, which came to their own in Michigan in the Gay Nineties, taking advantage of ideal waterfront sites. The Grand Hotel on Mackinaw Island of 1887 adheres to the American resort hotel tradition of a three-story colonnade stretching the length of a long frame structure; yet here the problem is attacked with a simplicity and directness that merits admiration (51). The Mettawas Hotel of 1889 at Kingsville, Ontario, shows the influence of the Queen Anne style. The subordination of the porch clears the way for a free sculptural treatment of the facade (demolished) (52). The bold juxtaposition of circular and rectangular masses in the Mettawas Casino of 1889 is an especially brilliant *tour de force,* a premonition of the best modern work (53).

Sadly enough, the growing tendency toward organic architecture in America was soon to be retarded by the appearance of eclectic architecture. This was brought about principally by three factors: the rise of academic architectural education in America, increased travel to Europe, and the World's Fair of 1893. This intensified exposure to architecture *comme il faut,* especially Classical and Renaissance architecture, offered an irresistible challenge. Students and architects alike were dazzled by the great wealth and beauty of historical monuments now within their visual range through photographs and travel. The architectural heritage of the past was theirs to plunder willy-nilly, and they were to emerge with trophies to adorn

the American cities. The growth of a universal organic architecture was nipped in the bud, and America was again to enter the "battle of the styles" with its usual earmarks of borrowed ornament and restraining anachronisms. But American architecture had weathered other storms and before long showed signs of weathering this one. Detroit architects, in line with the times, went about erecting some rather successful though unprogressive buildings. In many cases, however, the discipline of a formalized approach may have benefitted current taste, as in the case of the Colonial Revival. The William C. McMillan house in Grosse Pointe, dated 1888, by Mason and Rice, followed by only two years the first Colonial Revival house by McKim, Mead and White in Newport, Rhode Island. Its broad clapboard surfaces and interesting use of porches and *porte-cochère* possess an informality and distinction carried over from the previous period, without too great attention to academic detail (54).

In 1889-90 Detroit's first conspicuous symptom of eclecticism was in the making. It was then that the medieval towers and roofs of Col. Frank J. Hecker's new French Renaissance chateau (Figure 4) rose above the leafy greenery of upper Woodward Avenue. Never had Detroit been exposed to such sophistries of architecture: the delicately carved pilasters and garlands, the shell niches, and the graceful columns and balusters. Needless to say, it took Detroiters by storm and remains today our most notable reminder of that era of shining victorias, English coachmen with side whiskers, and gay cotillions (55).

Col. Hecker had wanted something different from the prevailing Romanesque type of dwelling. Interested in Detroit, he wanted his abode to be entirely the product of native craftsmanship. Young Louis Kamper, filled with new ideas he had developed during eight years of study under McKim, Meade and White, was just the man to cater to Hecker's tastes. Kamper was born in 1861 in Bliesdalheim, Bavaria, Germany, and had studied at the Technical School at Rheinpfalz before coming to America. He felt that no style could better express a happy, homelike life than the style of Francis the First. Then too, Detroit, being a French town, was the natural place for French architecture. Certainly light buff Indiana limestone and unfading green slate were less gloomy than the red tile and Lake Superior sandstone of the Romanesque Revival. To be consistent, Mr. Kamper designed all the furniture of the house in a lighter, less bulky French and Italian style. Fireplaces are to be found in all the major rooms and in the large central hall. Carrying out the theme of cheerfulness, a stained glass window at the landing on the south wall brings a many-hued luminosity into the heart of the house. William Wright and Company of Detroit did the interior cabinet work. The oval dining room is panelled in mahogany, the hall in white oak, and the library in English oak with featured burl panels. The floor of the den is teakwood. William McKinley must have been impressed by the elegance of the house when he was entertained there in 1896. Col. Hecker, a close friend of Freer, shared some of his artistic interests. He had paintings by Rembrandt and Whistler, and in the den were three wax panels of female figures by Thomas Dewing (56).

The J. B. Book residence on Jefferson Avenue by Louis Kamper exhibits the Italianate influence of McKim, Meade and White (57).

In the nineties the eyes of all architects, young and old, were turned toward Europe. In 1890, at twenty-one, Albert Kahn took a trip to Europe on a $500 scholarship he received from the magazine "American Architect." Upon his return he set to work doing eclectic designs in the office of Mason and Rice. He was responsible for the William Livingston house of 1893 on Eliot Street in the style of

Francis the First and the Hecker-Freer house of 1895 on Ferry Avenue. The design of the stone balcony of the latter was based on the work of Bramante (58 and 59).

Mr. Mason went to Europe in 1884 and 1911. He did sketches and water colors of scenes in Europe and brought back excellent photographs of European works of art, which he had mounted, bound and placed in his library, which adjoined the draughting room. Young Kahn enjoyed using this library and always considered it a part of his education. Later he installed a similar library in his own office.

In 1894 Mason and Rice built Mrs. Campau Thompson's house. The French Renaissance doorway was executed by Julius Melchers (60). The Hiram Walker and Sons office of 1892 in Walkerville and the Detroit Opera House of 1898 were both in the Renaissance style (61 and 62).

In 1898 Mason separated from Rice, and the firm took on the former's name. In 1896 Kahn started his own company with George Nettleton, under the name of Nettleton and Kahn. For a short interval the firm was known as Nettleton, Kahn, and Trowbridge. George Nettleton and Alexander Trowbridge had formerly been in Mason's office. Trowbridge soon joined Ackerman professionally in New York. In two years Nettleton died and Kahn called in his brothers to assist him. In 1902 Kahn collaborated with Mason on several buildings.

John Scott was one of the more important architects of the eclectic period. He was born in Ipswich, England, in 1850 and came to Detroit with his father while he was still a young man. He worked in the office of his father, William Scott, and later became head of the firm of Scott, Kamper and Scott, with Louis Kamper and his brother, Arthur Scott, the engineer. They built the Hecker house in 1889-90. Later heading the firm of John Scott and Co., he built the Wayne County Building between 1895 and 1902 in the Italian Renaissance style (63). With William Reed-Hill as associate, he designed the old Wayne County Jail and the H. N. Torrey house of 1911-13 in Grosse Pointe, also in the Italian Renaissance style (64 and 65). William Reed-Hill was educated at the Boston Technical School and was very fond of the Italian style, especially the Palazzo Cancelleria. Another building in the same style is the Detroit Athletic Club by Albert Kahn, dated 1915 (66).

The culmination of eclecticism in public buildings came with the construction of the main Detroit Public Library by Cass Gilbert in 1917-21 and the Detroit Institute of Arts by Paul Cret in 1922-27. These two giants standing face to face across Woodward Avenue represent a final simplification of Italian Renaissance forms into block-like masses with large concentrated apertures boldly accented by deep reveals. They follow the precedent set for this type of building by the Boston Public Library, the New York Public Library, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (67 and 68). A modern architect would have been less concerned with monumentality and would have made a greater study of flexibility, lighting, and accessibility to the street, perhaps, in the end, creating a more useful building.

The most natural domain of borrowed styles is the private residence, a field in which there is not such a pressing demand for adaptation. Even today wealthy men live in Italian villas, French chateaux, or English manor houses. These imported anachronisms are part of a curious discrepancy between the machine civilization and the atmosphere in which its leading citizens live. The escape to the suburbs is a factor that contributes to this form of cultural maladjustment. The imitation of architectural forms and furnishings belonging to a handicraft era has doomed new forms and techniques expressive of the machine age. That people prefer to live in a Mediaeval, Renaissance, or Colonial atmosphere suggests

that they have not been able to interpret the modern age in terms of their physical environment. Education is partly responsible for this deficiency in its equal emphasis on all periods of past architecture and art and its failure to lay sufficient emphasis on or, in many cases, to recognize contemporary trends. All this is not to say that there have not been some successful derivative houses built between the turn of the century and the second World War. There has been considerable excellence in the smaller houses; but on the whole this type has not achieved the distinction apparent in a few of the large houses.

The most satisfactory large houses are those that avoid the purely antiquarian tendencies and are tempered by a fine feeling for design and orientation. Restrained use of derivative detail does not prevent them from carrying on the American tradition of flexibility and livability.

The Eugene W. Lewis house of 1912 and the Dexter M. Ferry, Jr. house of 1915 in Grosse Pointe, by Trowbridge and Ackerman of New York, display a fine sense of design and proportion and take full advantage of their southern lake exposures by ample fenestration and inviting terraces (69 and 70). The Henry Stephens house of 1913 and the Russell A. Alger house of 1910 by Charles Platt, employ a restrained and scholarly use of detail and exhibit a well-studied and charming inter-relation between the house and garden (71 and 72). Albert Kahn considered the Alvan Macaulay house of 1930 one of his most successful private houses. Its pleasing proportions and simplicity of design come as a relief from the usual confusion of gables and half-timber work common to the average run of pseudo-Tudor work. It is a curious paradox that the world's foremost industrial architect should have continued building an eclectic residence every year or so (73).

A closer scrutiny of European models brought about a revolution in church architecture as early as the nineties. The Latin cross took the place of the Greek cross, and the Gothic returned in a blaze of glory. In 1890 Mason and Rice, turning their backs on the Romanesque, completed Trinity Episcopal Church at Grand River and Trumbull under the patronage of James E. Scripps. Mr. Scripps sent draughtsmen to England to study and make drawings of fourteenth century parish churches. They even took strips of sheet lead and bent them around mouldings, the better to make accurate tracings (74).

Mr. Mason tells of an incident that occurred during the construction which reflects the influence, then prevalent, of the teachings of William Morris. Mason noticed that a keystone in an arch had been set somewhat off center. He told the supervisor to reset it. Scripps, overhearing the order, insisted that a keystone thus laid gave the building the cachet of individual craftsmanship which he desired. Needless to say, the keystone is still off center.

Most outstanding of the Neo-Gothic churches that were to follow is St. Paul's Cathedral (1908-1919) by Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson of Boston (75).

One of the leading architectural firms of the twentieth century in Detroit is the firm of Donaldson and Meier. John M. Donaldson (1854-1941), senior member of the firm of Donaldson and Meier, was born in Stirling, Scotland, and was brought to Detroit by his parents at the age of two. After an education in the Detroit public schools and a brief period in the architectural office of J. V. Smith, he went abroad, studying art and architecture in the Polytechnic and Art Academy at Munich, Germany, and in the Atelier André of the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. In Europe he cultivated the friendship of the painters Frank Duveneck and William M. Chase. Returning to Detroit in 1878, he was associated with Henry T. Brush, the architect, until Mr. Brush's death in 1879. Donaldson's

first office was in a three-cornered room in that odd flat-iron building still standing at the junction of Michigan and Lafayette. Mr. Mason remembers the bearded young architect at this time sitting on a couch in his office talking about his friends across the sea and about the artistic theories he had picked up abroad.

Being a competent sculptor as well as an architect, Donaldson was responsible for the statue of Marquette now adorning the City Hall. Julius Melchers did the other three statues of Cadillac, La Salle, and Richard. Later in life Donaldson became the president of the Detroit Museum of Art and also of the Detroit City Plan and Improvement Commission. He was a director of the American Institute of Architects.

The firm of Donaldson and Meier was responsible for many of the early steel skyscrapers in Detroit, including the old Penobscot Building and the old Union Trust Building, dated 1900-1902 (76). One of their more academic types of buildings was Alumni Memorial Hall at Ann Arbor.

It was not long before the influence of Louis Sullivan began to be evident in Detroit commercial structures. The D. J. Healy Store of 1910 by Postle and Mahler and the Baldwin Building brought to Woodward Avenue the strip windows and the elongated spandrels that were to give a clearer external expression of the intervals of the steel skeleton beneath. The "Luxfer Prisms" used in the upper part of the windows of these two buildings foreshadow the glass bricks of today (77). Rayl's Hardware Building, built by Baxter, O'Dell and Halpin in 1915, continues in the Sullivan manner, even to the extent of employing red terra cotta surfacing (78).

Some of Albert Kahn's early commercial architecture shows a decidedly progressive tendency. The terra cotta Boulevard Building (Figure 5) of 1913, on the northeast corner of Woodward and Grand Boulevard, is as clean-cut a piece of commercial architecture as one could find anywhere. The windows are increased to their maximum size; the width of the corner piers is equal to the width of the lateral piers; and the piers are uniform from the cornice to the pavement. Such advanced logic was frequently neglected in the roaring twenties (79). The Finsterwald Building of 1919 on the northwest corner of Washington Boulevard and Michigan Avenue has a richness of texture and a restraint of design that give further proof of the superiority of Kahn's work at this time (80). In the Woodward Building of 1915 his use of metal spandrels with terra cotta piers gives the building a lightness of quality altogether revolutionary (81). In Kahn's work there is a directness and a mechanical precision that are the true index of the machine age. In the General Motors Building (Figure 6) of 1920 this factor is carried to its logical climax. The principle of mechanical repetition is even found in the quadruple bays which jut out like a series of massive promontories (82). The Fisher Building of 1928 never reached the high architectural standard established by the General Motors Building (83). The New Center Building of 1931, also erected by Kahn for the Fisher Brothers, is the third of the triumvirate that form the New Center, an ostensible effort to overcome downtown urban congestion by establishing a new uptown business center. Someday it is to be hoped that a plaza may join the three buildings.

The Washington Boulevard development is another example of the beneficial results that occur when a forward-looking architect is backed by the real estate interests of a Detroit family. To begin with, Louis Kamper, with the cooperation of Mayor Philip Breitmeyer (1909-1910), had replaced the original single lane of pavement by the present parked boulevard with its advanced scheme for traffic circulation. The building line had been set on the line determined by the

wall of the Statler Hotel. Later Kamper had designed the handsome street lamps which lend a note of elegance to Detroit's only north-south artery. Washington Boulevard is indeed a perfect setting for the many handsome buildings Louis Kamper erected for the Book brothers (84).

The position of Griswold Street as the chief artery of Detroit's financial district has never been challenged. During the business boom of the twenties a brotherhood of skyscrapers made their appearance along its southern extremities, incidentally doing little to decrease downtown congestion. One of the best designed of these giants is the David Stott Building of 1928 by Donaldson and Meier. It has the assurance of an established generic type that can be found in a score of other American cities (85). Smith, Hinchman and Grylls were the architects of the Buhl Building (1924-25), the Penobscot Building (1927-29), and the Union Guardian Building (1927-28). These structures are interesting for the picturesque way in which they dominate the Detroit skyline. As architecture the Penobscot and Union Guardian Buildings lack the sincerity of the Buhl Building. Setbacks have been created for aesthetic ends, and an effect of masonry monumentality has been sought in buildings that should express lightness and transparency (86 and 87). Considerably more successful as architectural achievements are this firm's Farmer Street block of the J. L. Hudson Company (1924-29) and the J. L. Hudson Company warehouse on Madison Avenue (1926-27) (88 and 89). The office is best known, however, for its preeminence in the field of industrial architecture.

It is interesting that Fred L. Smith (1860-1941), the son of Mortimer L. Smith, represents the third generation of the Smith family to follow the architectural profession. Mr. Smith received his training in his father's office and later became president of Smith, Hinchman and Grylls, which was incorporated in 1907. Theodore H. Hinchman, Jr., (1869-1936), a consulting engineer, received his training in engineering at the University of Michigan and was treasurer of the firm. Humphrey John Maxwell Grylls (1865-1942) was born in England and came to America in 1881. He worked in several Detroit architectural offices, including John Scott and Company, and was later vice-president of Smith, Hinchman and Grylls.

Among recent buildings of excellent modern design is the postoffice of 1940 on East Jefferson (90), designed by Louis A. Simon. Two commercial buildings exhibiting the latest tendencies are the F. W. Woolworth Building of 1941 by Hyde and Williams and the Edison Service Building of 1938 by John C. Thornton. The latter represents a decided forward stride in building technique and design. The vertical piers disappear almost completely, and the building becomes a simple mass, faced with alternate bands of brick and glass brick. No window openings are needed as the building is completely air-conditioned. This purifies the air and decreases noise and dirt. It provides a cheerful and healthful atmosphere in which to work. Here is a pattern for the city of tomorrow, restful to the eye and mind (91, 92 and 93).

To overlook industrial architecture in an article on Detroit architecture would certainly be a grave omission. But because of the difficulty in obtaining material during wartime and because the subject has been dealt with at length elsewhere, I shall confine myself to a few remarks on the industrial architecture of Albert Kahn.

With the coming of Kahn the architectural profession in Detroit reached its maturity. After over a century of assimilation and interpretation of trends originated in eastern centers and in Chicago, Detroit originated a new development in industrial architecture of the widest importance. Boston and Chicago in the persons of Richardson, Sullivan and Wright had altered the concept of domestic and commercial architecture. It remained for Detroit in the person of Kahn to improve the

concept of the factory. The automotive industry, centered in Detroit, gave mass production its greatest impetus. As the architect of most of the automobile plants, Kahn became the outstanding architect for mass production.

In 1914 Kahn established a new precedent in Detroit by building a Packard plant in reinforced concrete. He imported steel sashes from England for this building. Later his brother Julius invented a new and more precisely calculable method of reinforcing concrete, which was widely used. However, factories soon had to be built of steel instead of concrete because of the necessity of wider spans. Vast spaces unobstructed by columns and enclosed with glass became the order of the day (see Dodge plant on cover). Kahn developed the idea of building a whole factory under one roof. A few photographs of Kahn's factories reveal the face of a new architecture of unlimited potentialities (94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99). Here architecture has been converted from an art into a business and by its sheer efficiency has acquired a beauty that is the result of the unrestricted adaptation of form to function. What better evidence could there be of the importance of modern architecture in the new economy? Kahn's plants, located in Stockholm, Moscow, Cape Town, Melbourne, Nanking, and Buenos Aires (to mention only a few of the foreign locations), are a premonition of a universal industrial system which will bind the world closer together after the war and will serve as a means of raising the standard of living and of preventing want.

Then, too, the post-war world should bring a better solution of the housing problem. People do not seem to realize that the same principles of scientific study and research that have improved their working quarters can improve their living quarters. They have become immune to substandard living quarters. Schools, museums, settlement houses, unions and newspapers have almost completely failed to make people realize the benefits that are within their reach; and the reactions of the public to modern architecture have been reduced to a childlike fear of the unfamiliar. If there is a tendency for people to abandon cities today, it is because they have not learned to live in them. Although this is the problem, to a large degree, of the city planner, it is also the problem of the architect. Zoning, parks, limited access highways, and parkways must do their part; but so must architecture. To offset the unnatural noise, dirt and confinement of the city, there is a human need for privacy, sunshine, and contact with the soil. Modern architecture attempts to answer these needs. The best architects of today are concentrating their attention on the living quarters of a more average income group. The larger houses are rapidly falling into the category of white elephants, and there is a tendency toward a greater uniformity of living quarters among all income groups. The variety comes not in size or stylistic trends, but in adaptation to environment and requirements. In Detroit today there is a handful of architects of the younger generation who have been trained in modern design and have relinquished any memories they may have had of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, or the Colonial period, in favor of a realistic approach to the problems of present-day living. They have given us a few examples of the new patterns of living that undoubtedly will be more widely accepted after the war.

The Grosse Pointe residence of W. C. Emory (Figure 7), built by Max Colter in 1939, proves what the modern theories can do to improve the small city house on the narrow city lot. Privacy and a pleasing outlook is achieved by placing the most lived-in rooms at the rear of the house overlooking the garden. The beauties of the sky and the garden are brought into the house by a large plate glass window dominating the living area. A feeling of spaciousness is attained by combining the dining area, the living area, and the study into one flexible unit. The convenient

location of the garage near the street minimizes expensive space-using pavement (100, 101, 102). The same advantages in a larger two-storied town house are to be found in the Axel J. Jansson house of 1941 by Buford L. Pickens in Rosedale Park. The street side is characterized by a convenient relationship between the garage door and the entrance and an interesting use of glass brick for the illumination of the staircase. Living and dining areas face a garden in the rear (103, 104).

A more unusual treatment of a town house is found in the Millard Pryor house, built in 1938, in Grosse Pointe Park by famed Alden B. Dow of Midland. The design of this house suggests the charming plastic effects that may be achieved by an imaginative designer. The interior, with its two-storied living room and interesting spatial relationships, perfectly expresses the new freedom and informality of modern living. The darkness and sense of confinement of the traditional dwelling has disappeared (105, 106). The three houses mentioned above are all built of cinder blocks.

Two other well designed modern houses in Grosse Pointe are the Koebel house of 1939 by Robert Swanson and the Dr. Frank A. Weiser house by Edward Hewitt. The principal rooms of both houses overlook the garden, and both have terraces that form a link between the house and garden (107 and 108). The Rosenau house of 1941 by Buford L. Pickens in Plymouth is an excellent example of a small house suited for more rural surroundings (109).

In 1942 two houses by Frank Lloyd Wright were completed outside of Detroit, the Gregor Affleck house in Bloomfield Hills (110, 111) and the Carl Wall house near Plymouth (112). It is significant that Detroit should at last be favored by these two masterpieces of organic design by the man who has been such an important factor in the development of modern architecture. It will be interesting to see what influence these works have on the local architecture.

So far examples of modern domestic architecture are few and far between in Detroit. Nowhere, except in the case of public housing, has modern design noticeably altered the general aspect of residential areas. A change can be hoped for when more private real estate interests are won over and when there is a greater development of cooperative and limited dividend projects. Unions and settlement houses can be counted on for a greater sponsorship of modern architecture when they have become aware of the special economic advantages that result from prefabrication and structural innovations. Prefabricated and demountable houses are the only answers to the housing needs of a poorly housed nation, and it is only a matter of time before houses will be as available to the average purse as the automobile and the radio have been in the past (113).

Housing has received a new impetus in recent years by government sponsorship. The economies of large-scaled planning have been demonstrated, and many new techniques have been utilized. Housing on a large scale helps to rehabilitate the city and bring order and cohesion to the city pattern. Dwelling units are grouped along connecting interior roads away from thoroughfares. Ample landscaped areas between apartments provide an atmosphere of spaciousness and relaxation not available in the ordinary apartment house. Well located community buildings, playgrounds, and shopping centers form a natural center for neighborhood life.

Housing projects administrated by the Detroit Housing Commission and the Federal Public Housing Authority in and near Detroit have been designed by local architects. Outstanding in design and planning are: the Parkside Addition, 1941, by the Parkside Architectural Associates (C. William Palmer, Eward A. Schilling, Clair W. Ditchy, and Nelson B. Hubbard), the Charles Project (Figure

8) 1941, by the Michigan Housing Associates (Thomas H. Hewlett, Owen A. Luckenbach, and Augustus O'Dell), the John W. Smith Homes, 1942, by Lyndon and Smith, and the Kramer Homes, 1942, at Center Line by Eliel and Eero Saarinen (114, 115).

Especially noteworthy as an individual building is the handsome community building in the Kramer Homes (Figure 9), which combines administrative offices, auditorium and school. Large window areas and separate doors relate classrooms to the out-of-doors (116). Experts in the design of schools, Eliel and Eero Saarinen are also responsible for the Crow Island School of 1940 in Winnetka, Illinois. Another Detroit firm of architects that have received national recognition for their school building is the firm of Lyndon and Smith. In 1937 they built the High School in Northville, Michigan, and in 1940 the High School Gymnasium-Auditorium in Farmington, Michigan (117). In the above series of schools, an understanding of modern trends in education has resulted in new architectural forms as frank and compelling in their beauty as the new industrial architecture.

The younger generation of architects mentioned above have matriculated at schools of architecture. Pickens studied at the University of Illinois, Dow at Columbia, Hewlett and Luckenbach at the University of Pennsylvania under Paul Cret, Palmer at Harvard, Eero Saarinen at Yale, and Ditchy, Lyndon and Smith at Michigan. This would seem to speak well for the modern professional architectural education.

Detroit has for two decades been the home of the internationally known Finnish architect, Eliel Saarinen. In 1922 he received second prize in the Chicago Tribune competition. Soon he was invited to teach at the School of Architecture of the University of Michigan. At that time the son of George G. Booth, Detroit philanthropist, was studying at the School of Architecture. He arranged a meeting between Saarinen and his father. Mr. Booth had long been interested in stimulating arts and crafts and educating the younger generation to enjoy and create art. He found that Saarinen shared his views. It was not long before he had engaged Saarinen as the architect of the Cranbrook Foundation. This consists of the Cranbrook School for Boys (1927), the Kingswood School (1939) and the Cranbrook Academy of Art, over which Saarinen now presides (118, 119).

Mr. Saarinen and his son, Eero, have been the architects for a series of outstanding buildings of different types in surrounding mid-western centers. Each building they have done has represented a new approach to the particular domain of architecture that they have invaded. The variety and beauty of the new forms they have created bear witness to the vitality of their art.

The faculty residences of the Academy of Art offer an interesting suggestion for double house development. The Kleinhaus Music Hall in Buffalo (1940-41), the Crow Island School in Winnetka, Illinois, the Wermuth House in Fort Wayne, Indiana (1942), the Tabernacle Church of Christ in Columbus, Indiana (1942), and the Kramer Homes housing project in Center Line, Michigan (1942), rank at the top of the list of American architectural production. It is to be hoped that the Saarinen plans for a Smithsonian Art Gallery in Washingon, D. C., may be realized after the war (120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128).

With such salutary trends of architect in and about Detroit, the future offers limitless possibilities when the present crisis has passed. Modern architecture is a true outgrowth of democratic freedom. In time it will reflect the increasing socialization characteristic of present-day democracy. In it is one of the greatest promises for the world of tomorrow. Tomorrow, too, will bring a greater consciousness of America's architectural past and the part it has played in the making of the present.

HAWKINS FERRY

FIG. 1. SIDNEY T. MILLER HOUSE, JEFFERSON AVENUE, BY GORDON W. LLOYD, 1864.

FIG. 2. DuCHARME HOUSE, JEFFERSON AVENUE, BY MORTIMER L. SMITH, 1869.

FIG. 3. CHARLES L. FREER HOUSE, EAST FERRY AVENUE, BY WILSON EYRE OF PHILADELPHIA, LATE EIGHTEEN EIGHTIES.

FIG. 4. FRANK J. HECKER HOUSE, WOODWARD AVENUE AND FERRY, BY LOUIS KAMPER, 1889-90.

FIG. 5. BOULEVARD BUILDING, WOODWARD AVENUE AND GRAND BOULEVARD, BY ALBERT KAHN, 1913.

FIG. 6. GENERAL MOTORS BUILDING, GRAND BOULEVARD, BY ALBERT KAHN, 1920.

FIG. 7. W. C. EMORY HOUSE, GROSSE POINTE, BY MAX COLTER, 1939.

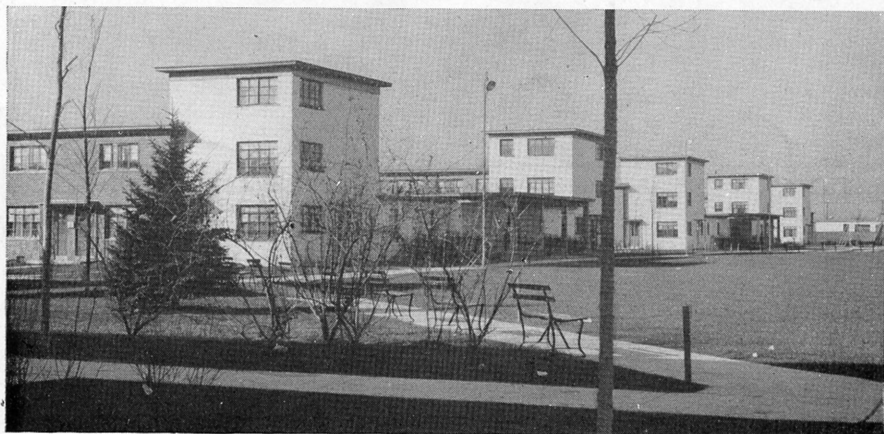

FIG. 8. CHARLES PROJECT BY MICHIGAN HOUSING ASSOCIATES (THOMAS H. HEWLETT, OWEN A. LUCKENBACH AND AUGUSTUS O'DELL), 1941.

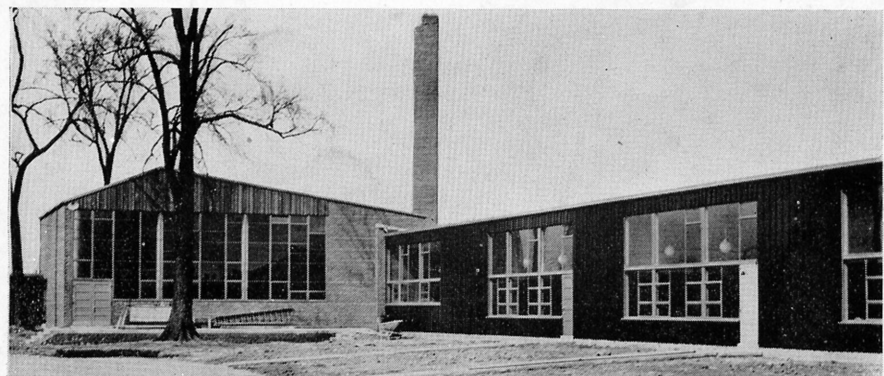

FIG. 9. COMMUNITY HOUSE, KRAMER HOMES, CENTER LINE, BY ELIEL AND EERO SAARINEN, 1942.