

INTEGRATION

DESIGN EXPRESSES THE CONTINUITY OF LIVING

BY JAMES C. ROSE

ALL the sins in design have not been committed by Landscape Architects. They really haven't done much harm, except in schools, since the average business man has stopped paying for the prestige of an Italian garden. Let us show compassion.

Landscape design exists in an isolated world of never-changing æstheticism. It is built on the nobility of classicism, where present-day work sits like a Byzantine capital decorating the top of a Doric column. Here, undisturbed by the hurly burly of life, the landscaper rehashes ancient "things of beauty" which he imagines will, with minor adjustments, remain a "joy forever." Let us not disturb him. He is building. Soon he will find himself projected on his Doric column to the exact position in space where even gravity will not claim him.

Architects have sinned more progressively. They have built a kind of scenic railway in design where anyone may get a thrill who takes the ride, but after a few nostalgic moments, the passenger is delivered to precisely the point where he got on, and whence he continues the haphazardry of his existence. With a few notable exceptions, architects have made no attempt to express any human experience outside the walls of a building. Houses are now, more than ever, designed as a special entity, wrapped in a package, and delivered to the public. No matter how closely they may resemble a "machine for living," they are still an *objet d'art*, and as such, may provide a momentary thrill and eventually become interesting to collectors, but at present, they have little relation to the rest of the world in which living also occurs.

Isn't it a little inconsistent, and perhaps unfair, to expect a Twentieth Century individual to step out of a stream-lined automobile, and then flounder through a Rousseauian wilderness until he reaches a "machine for living"? We cannot confine living, which is a process, to little segregated compartments that end at the edge of the nearest terrace

where we are again asked to adjust ourselves to what, in its highest form, becomes an Eighteenth Century landscape painting.

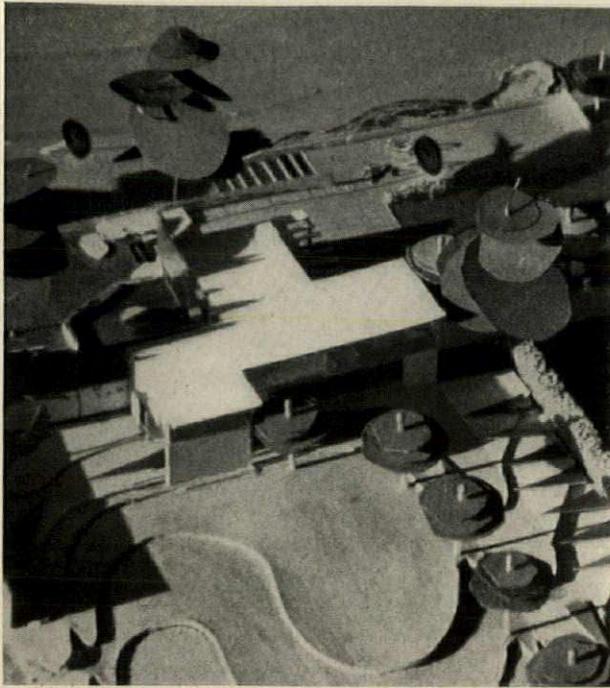
II

The most justified criticism of any pioneer attempt or existing condition is its remoteness from the human equation. Certainly best and strongest of all human urges is the desire, however frustrated it may show itself at times, of individuals to link themselves with a larger social and universal consciousness. Any attempt to pigeon-hole activity in little entities of design is doomed to failure because it does not fulfil this human equation.

The economic and industrial value of standardization in building is valid, but the infinity of uses and variety of local conditions make the complete factory house impracticable. The standardization of individual units, however, reduces cost through mass production and contributes to freedom in design arrangement so that a building can be adapted to its specific uses and local conditions without depriving individuals of physical contact with the outside world. As buildings become part of the communal actualities of our lives, they gain in social significance and meaning, and we, as builders, have made design an expression of contemporary life.

III

A small mind requires separate entities, because they are easily understood; but an entity, however brilliant, has no fate but oblivion. Being complete in itself, it forms no integral part of our evolution. The so-called "practical" mind can be convinced only by figures on a stock exchange report. It sees only in terms of the sales value of a new model, and, like Mrs. Warren, will do anything for temporary profit regardless of the social deterioration or private repugnance involved. Under the guise of a false and ephemeral practicality, which is not always as inescapable as we imagine, this mentality repeats its forlorn performance in the self-appointed role as vic-



In the approach to this attractive house, Rose has sought an integration of the driveway, parking area, garage, and service area in less space than that required by the usual forecourt of traditional designs. Even in the working model, the movement and direction resultant from his characteristic use of materials are apparent. The house is an integral part of the entire scheme; not separated from the "outside" but an area intimately unified

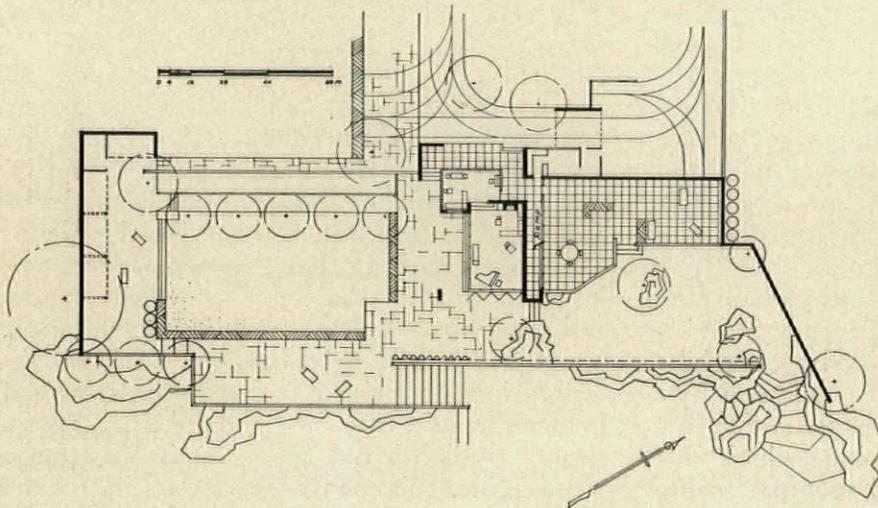
tim rather than master of evolution.

The truly modern mind accepts the human equation in design and the need of individual integration with a larger spatial and social conception. There is no sound economic argument against this point of view. Actually, cost is the best argument for more expansive

integration. The old-time house with a garden tacked on has passed from contemporary thought in design not only because it was cumbersome and tedious, but also because to build in segregated compartments requires more space and maintenance for the same amount of living.

IV

The fragmentary rather than completeness is a larger conception in design, and finds its place better in the Twentieth Century scheme. We cannot go back to the days when the ancestral home provided a setting for generations of continuous family life. With the changed tempo of industrial and social adjustments it would be an escape, but no solution to the problem. Nor can we build for eternity or foretell the needs of future progress. There is really no beginning and no ending in the pattern of evolution. There is no definite boundary to the influence of man upon the times or times upon the man. Why should we try to preserve in design an artificiality which does not exist in our lives? The problem for us today is to bring together the dangling, unrelated elements which affect our lives. The greatest service of art lies not in producing isolated objects on the end of a Doric column or momentary thrills on a scenic railway, but in endowing the common actualities with form and arrangement to express Twentieth Century life and individual affinity to a social and universal quality. We can do this profitably by forgetting the mean, little, professional boundaries which we have inherited from the stagnant era, and developing continuity in our environment expressive of Twentieth Century communal needs.



The economy of area which distinguishes this plan by Rose is apparent when the general lay-out is studied. Segregated, the same units would require several acres