

Exclusive for New York Times Educational page

The way in which educators and architects work together to create the appropriate setting for carrying out latest educational methods is graphically illustrated in the current architectural exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, 730 Fifth Avenue. School buildings in the new international style of architecture, as developed both in this country and in Europe to meet modern educational needs, are shown in the exhibition in models and photographs.

"The international style in architecture is especially adapted to school buildings, because functional planning, the fundamental principle of the new architecture, is exactly what schools need to develop in sympathy with modern trends in scientific education," says Philip Johnson, director of the exhibition.

"Until very recently school architecture has not kept pace with educational methods. School buildings have followed a traditional, historic pattern. They have been civic monuments rather than buildings designed especially for school use. Designs were based on Georgian or English Gothic styles of architecture, styles never originally planned for school use. It is not strange, therefore, that it was difficult to fit modern educational needs into these outmoded designs."

In the new architecture, in school buildings or in any structure, the individual rooms and the exterior design are planned to fit the needs which the building will serve. There is no stereotyped pattern into which the whole must fit. In fact, the flexibility of the modern style of architecture is its great advantage in making an harmonious whole.

In planning a modern school building in the new style, educator and architect decide first on what is needed--the size of the rooms in order to give plenty of space to each pupil; the best placing of library, administration offices, auditorium, gymnasium; the desired exposure for certain classrooms. Then the building is planned to meet these requirements. The solution of these functional problems determines the design of the building.

Freedom in planning makes it possible to place windows wherever desired without the necessity, as in older types of architecture, of pre-

serving traditional balance in window-spacing. Often in the new buildings, one entire side of the building facing south, is a wall of glass.

Treatment of classrooms as individual units is another striking feature of the new style in school architecture. This appears in designs by both American and European architects, but is perhaps most clearly illustrated in the architectural exhibition in the model of the "Ring Plan" school, a project by Richard Neutra of Los Angeles. Each classroom is a separate unit, radiating from an inner circle of green lawn. The arrangement in the ring-form furnishes the necessary centralization.

Each classroom opens on its own terrace so that classes may be held out-of-doors when desired. The plan is intended for a warm climate, and includes an open-air swimming pool. The project in reality is a design for a series of schools to be located outside the residential area of an ideal city, "Rush City Reformed." The pupils would be delivered to the school in buses. The buildings would be constructed of standardized, shop-fabricated parts, thus greatly reducing the cost per unit.

A more compact plan, suitable for construction within a city, is the completed Friedrich Ebert School, Frankfurt-on-Main. In this school the classrooms are arranged in set-back tiers, and all face south. Each classroom opens onto its own terrace which is in reality a private walled garden open to the sunlight but sheltered by surrounding walls so that enough privacy is assured for classroom use.

The most complete example of school buildings planned for the purposes each is to serve is exemplified in the famous Bauhaus at Dessau, Germany, designed by Walter Gropius, one of the founders of the International style of architecture. The Bauhaus is made up of three units, the classrooms and administrative building, the workshops, and a separate wing for living quarters for the faculty. Each is planned as an individual unit, the workshops with an abundance of light, the administrative offices and auditorium near the entrance, the living quarters in a detached wing. The parts of the building are clearly separated in plan and distinguished from one another in design. They are joined by low connecting wings.

The new architecture is well adapted to open-air and health schools. One model open-air school shown in the current exhibition was completed last year in Amsterdam. The building has many open-air porches, and other

enclosed in glass. The flat roof also may be used for recreation and sun-bathing.

In this country, the Hessian Hills school/follows the plan of continuous windows facing south and doors from each classroom opening directly onto an outer terrace. "The simplicity of its design and the frankness of construction of the building" is commented upon in the exhibition's catalogue by Professor Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., of Wesleyan University. The architects of the Hessian Hills school are George Howe and William Lescaze, of New York and Philadelphia.

"Regularity and flexibility, two principles of the international style, are illustrated in the buildings in the current exhibition," says Mr. Johnson. "The architects of the Classical and Renaissance, and often of the Medieval periods, designed their facades and plans in terms of bilateral symmetry. They also usually divided their facades horizontally in three parts. In the international style these arbitrary conventions of symmetry and triple division are abandoned for a method of design which accepts, first, both vertical and horizontal repetition and, second, flexible asymmetry, for both are natural concomitants of modern building.

"The modern architect feels it unnecessary to add a gabled porch in the center and at either end of his school or library. He permits the rows of windows in his school to repeat themselves boldly without artificial accents or terminations. The resulting regularity, which may in itself be very handsome, is given accent by a door or ventilator, stair tower, chimney or fire escape, placed asymmetrically as utility often demands, and the principle of flexibility permits."

The architectural exhibition will continue at the Museum's galleries through March 23, and then proceed on a three years' tour of the United States, going first to the Pennsylvania Museum of Art in Philadelphia. The exhibition will be in Los Angeles at the time of the Olympic games, <sup>in</sup> July of this year.