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MODERN STYLE IN SCHOOL ARCHITECTURE ATTRACTS EDUCATORS

Four examples of the modern style in architecture for school buildings, stressing freedom of planning and an abundance of windows, are attracting the attention of educators visiting the Architectural Exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, 730 Fifth Avenue. Two of the school plans shown are designed for American communities.

One of the two American schools has been completed, the Hessian Hills School at Croton-on-Hudson, designed by Howe & Lescaze, architects of New York and Philadelphia. The other school designed by an American architect is a project for a "Ring Plan" school, the work of Richard Neutra of Los Angeles. The schools in the exhibition designed by foreign architects include a model of the famous Bauhaus at Dessau, Germany, the work of Gropius, one of the leading German architects in the new international style; and the Friedrich Ebert School, Frankfurt-on-Main, designed by Ernst May and associates.

Public school teachers who have attended conferences at the Museum during the past fortnight have shown special interest in the new type of school buildings in the exhibition, as has Dean A. R. Bossange of the department of architecture, New York University, ~~with attention to the advantages of the new architecture as applied in schools.~~ Groups of students from Columbia University and New York University also have shown appreciation of the models for school buildings.

"Freedom of plan is the principal advantage in the modern style in school architecture," says Philip Johnson, director of the exhibition. "In the older type of school architecture, Georgian, for example, the arrangement of the rooms necessarily had to follow the plan of the outside of the building, and windows had to be placed in definite relation to the exterior design.

"In the modern style, the windows can be arranged as desired, often across the entire side of the building. The necessary large rooms, such as the auditorium or gymnasium, can be placed where most convenient, sometimes in a separate wing without interfering in any way with the

harmony of the design as a whole.

"The chance to provide plenty of sunlight and fresh air, so essential in any school, makes the modern style of special merit in this type of building. There are many other advantages, such as the use of flat roofs for recreation, and the possibilities of classrooms opening onto terraces."

An example of classrooms, each with its own door opening onto an outer terrace so that, when desired, classes may be held out-of-doors, is found in the Hessian Hills School. The classrooms face south, with windows across the entire side of the building. "The simplicity of ~~the~~ 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 project for the "Ring Plan" School 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. Each classroom is entirely separate, and yet the arrangement in the ring-form provides the needed centralization. The classrooms open on individual ~~terraces~~ terraces. There is an open-air swimming pool, and buildings for manual training and domestic sciences.

A more compact arrangement, suitable for construction in 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 garden, open to the sunlight, but sheltered by surrounding walls so that enough privacy is assured for classroom-use.

The Bauhaus at Dessau illustrates the modern method of designing units of school buildings for the purposes they are to serve. The Bauhaus is made up of three units, the classrooms and administrative building, the workshops, and a separate wing for living quarters. 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.