Today's Sweden in photographs

By G.E. Kidder Smith

Author

Smith, G. E. Kidder (George Everard Kidder), 1913-1997

Date

1941

Publisher

[publisher not identified]

Exhibition URL

www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/3009

The Museum of Modern Art's exhibition history—from our founding in 1929 to the present—is available online. It includes exhibition catalogues, primary documents, installation views, and an index of participating artists.

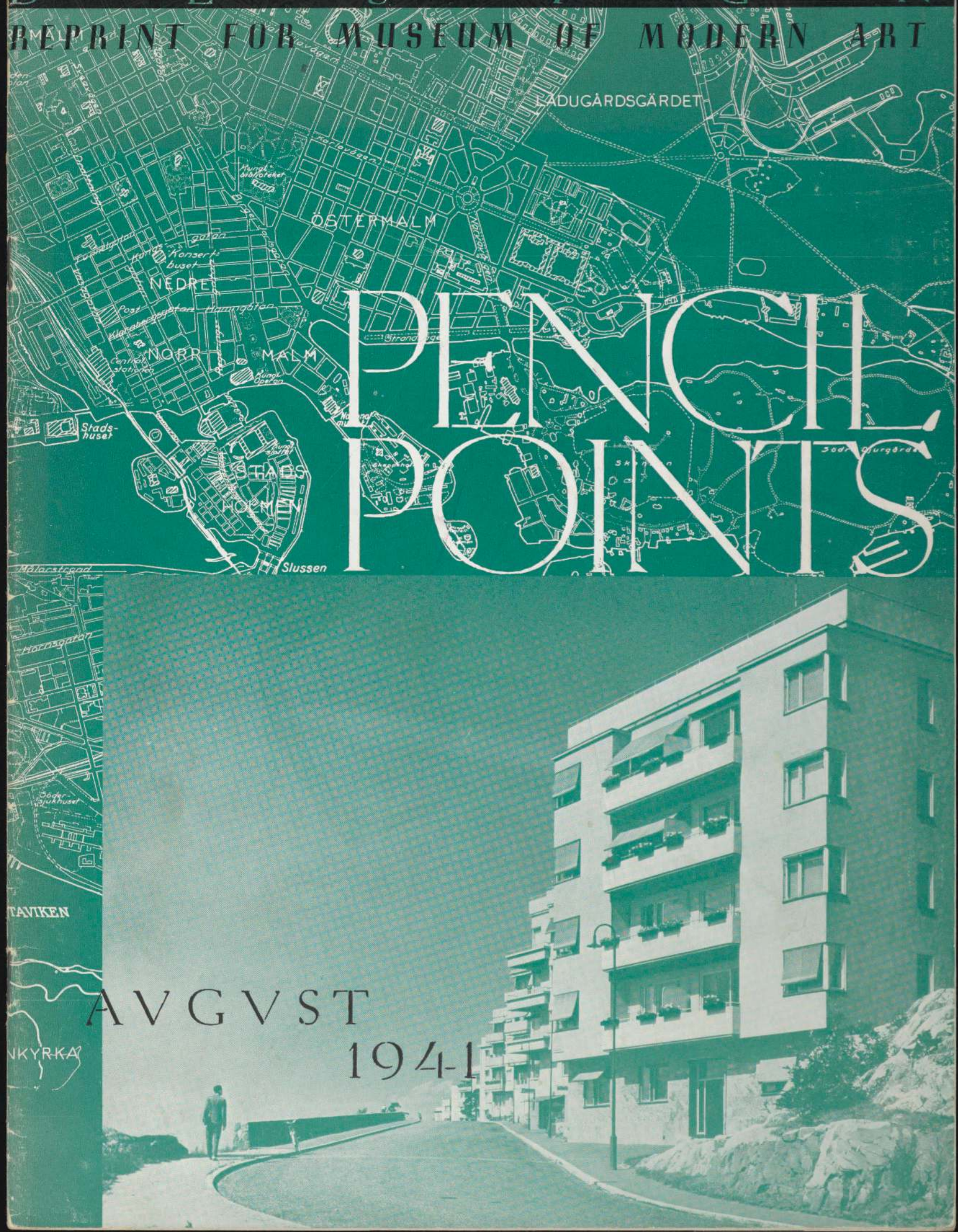
© 2017 The Museum of Modern Art

D E S I G N

REPRINT FOR MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

PENCIL POINTS

AVGVST
1941



12-8-81

Archive
MoMA
142
c.2

From the library of
GEORGE MANASSE
1893 - 1980



THE GREAT CREMATORIUM DESIGNED BY GUNNAR ASPLUND, IT WAS COMPLETED LITTLE OVER A YEAR AGO

TODAY'S SWEDEN

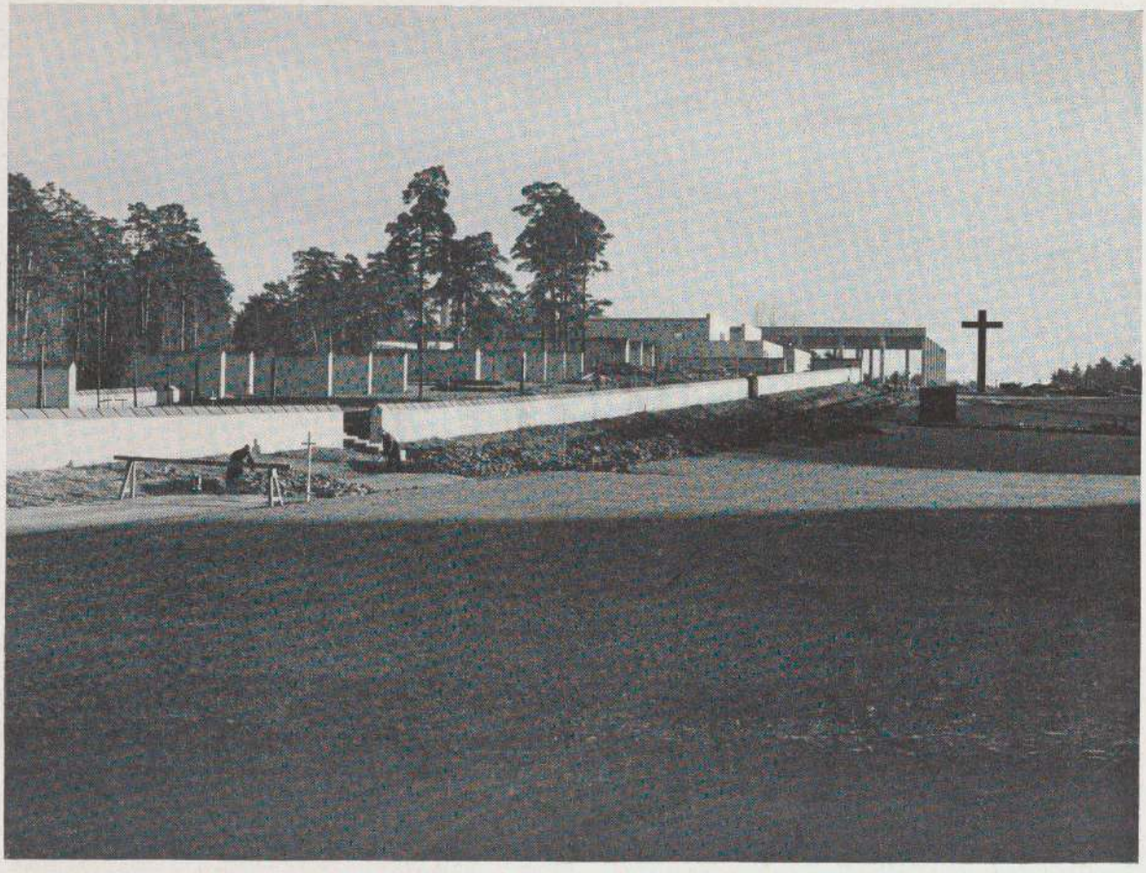
IN PHOTOGRAPHS BY G. E. KIDDER SMITH

Along about ten years ago there began to be evidences among young men on traveling fellowships of an impatience with the historic monuments of Europe and an ever-increasing interest in the manifestations of modern design. This perception was well along when G. E. Kidder Smith and his traveling companion, John G. Faron, went to Scandinavia, as holders of 1939-40 fellowships given by the American Scandinavian Foundation, to do research in Modern Swedish Architecture.

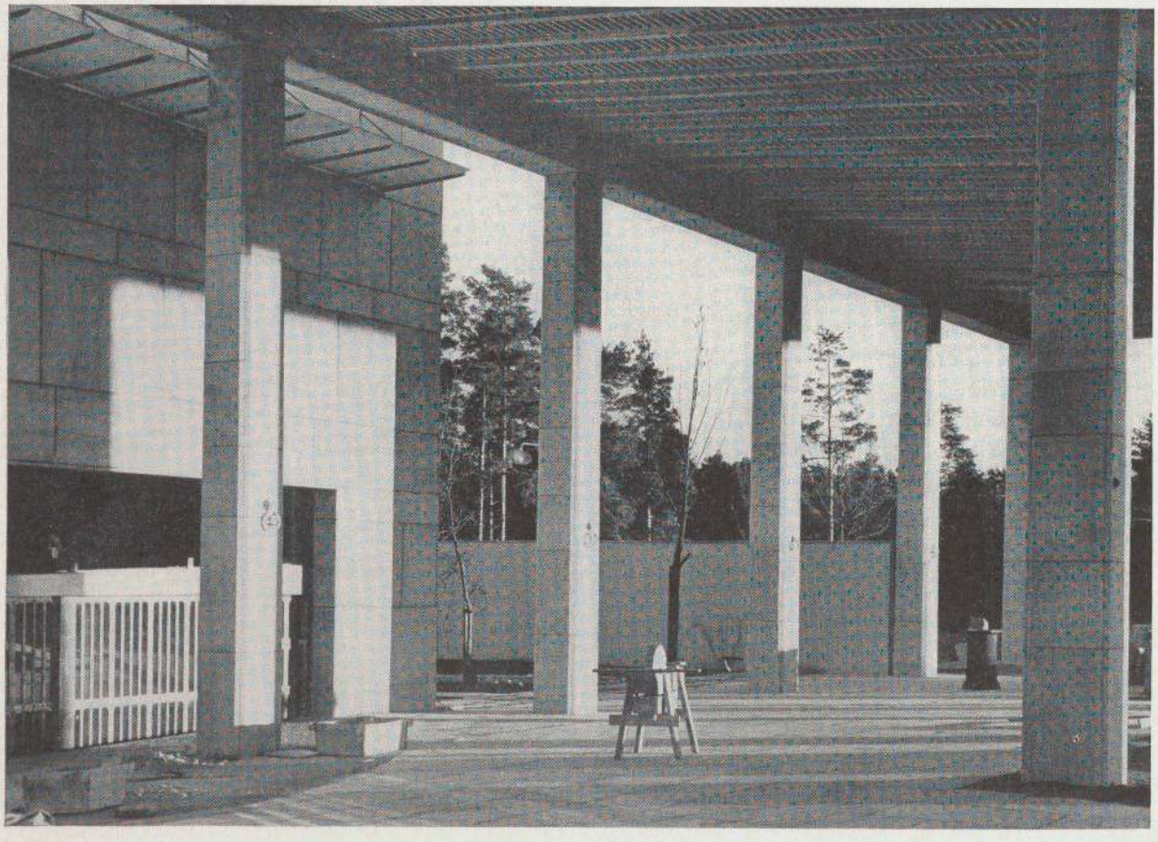
With the serious approach of the intelligent student, supplemented by exceptional skill in the use of the camera, Mr. Smith and his friend secured and brought back with them last year a magnificent collection of photographs of recent Swedish architecture, some of which are recorded on the following pages and more of which have been incorporated into a traveling exhibition circulated by the Museum of Modern Art under the general title, "Stockholm Builds."

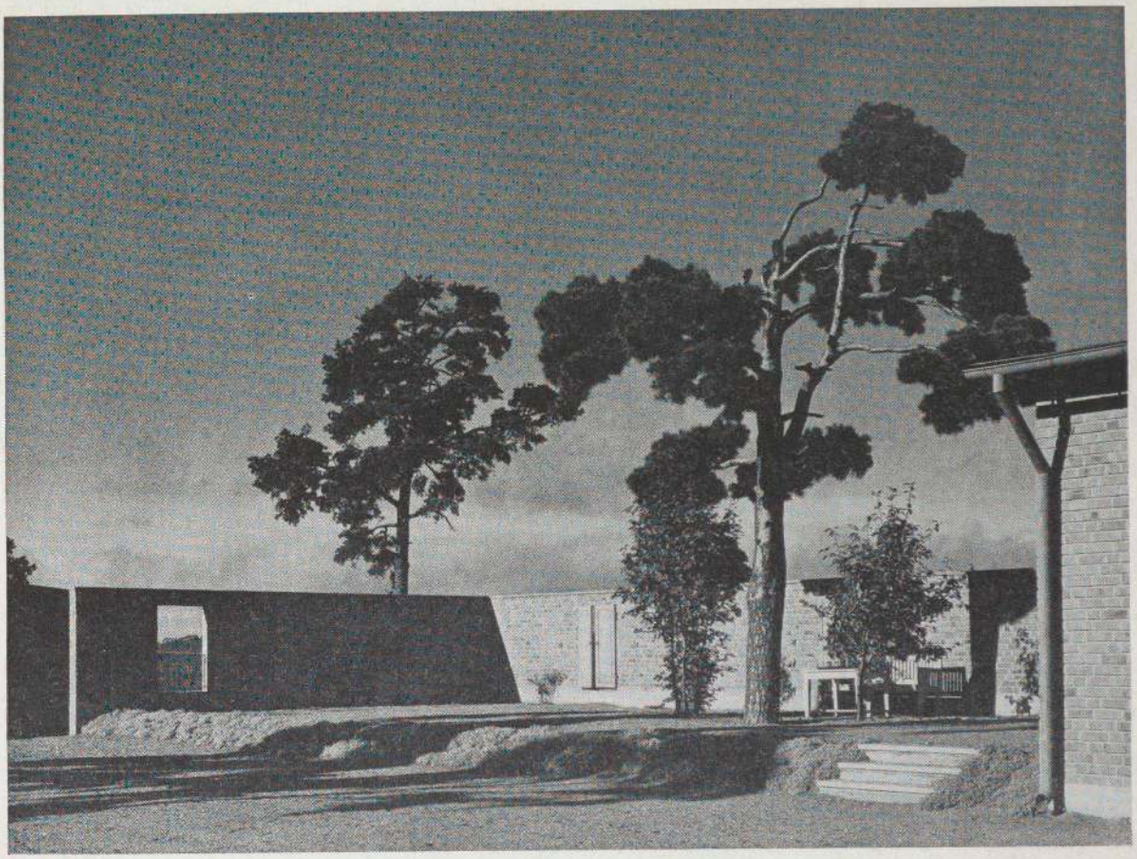
This exhibition has already been shown at Pittsburgh, Chicago, the University of Virginia, Vassar College, Duke University, and Cornell University. The show will be exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York during the month of August and will thereafter go out to such points as may be arranged for by responsible exhibitors.

The significance of Sweden as a source for modern architectural design is safely attested by works already accomplished. Swedish architects have set a high standard in town and community planning, in the application of the expanding cooperative movement to the field of building, in the exercise of public control over speculative developments, in encouraging and maintaining high standards of craftsmanship, and in educating their public to the value of good design toward more civilized living. The photographs shown herewith are but a sample of the larger collection, which it is urged all architects make an effort to see.



GUNNAR ASPLUND'S CREMATORIUM: A MAGNIFICENT ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPTION IN WHICH MONUMENTALITY IS ACHIEVED IN A WHOLLY CONTEMPORARY MANNER. ONE ENTERS UP AN ARTIFICIALLY CREATED SLOPE, PASSING A SERIES OF WALLS ON WHICH ARE MEMORIAL PLAQUES AND ARRIVING AT THE DIGNIFIED SHELTER WITH ITS SQUARE, MARBLE-FACED POSTS. THE PRINCIPAL CHAPEL ADJOINS THIS (SEE LEFT BELOW)



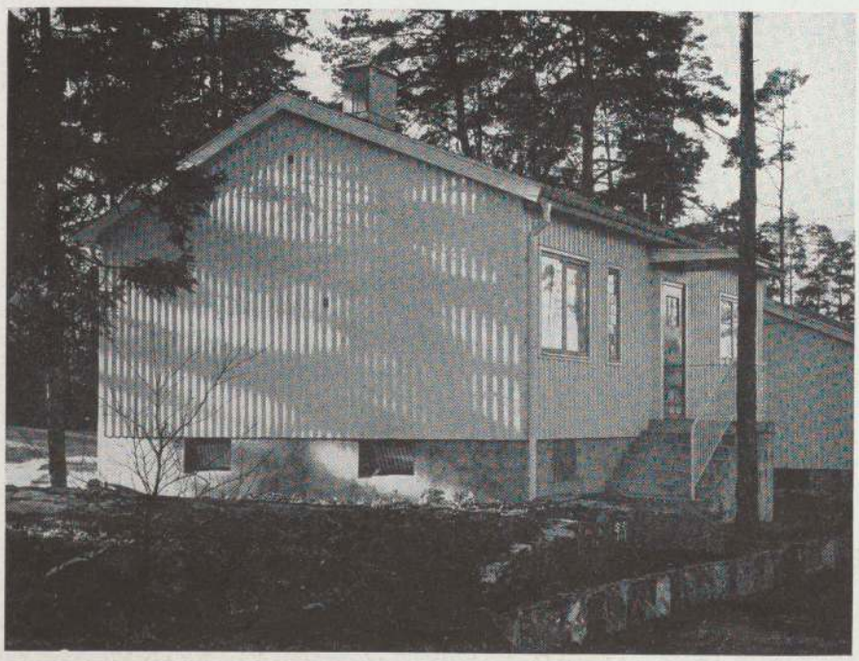


NYBODAHEMMET, AN ESTABLISHMENT FOR CHILDREN OF INDIGENT PARENTS, DESIGNED BY PAUL HEDQUIST. THE SCHEME IS SPREAD OUT ON A HIGH HILL OVERLOOKING STOCKHOLM AND CONSISTS PRINCIPALLY OF A NUMBER OF SMALL ONE-STORY BUILDINGS FOR DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS. THIS TREATMENT REMOVES ANY INSTITUTIONAL FEELING. ABOVE, A SHELTERED PLAY TERRACE. BELOW, A NURSES DORMITORY FOR THE HOME





THE CITY PLANNING OFFICE OF STOCKHOLM HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LAYOUT OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS FOR CITY-OWNED PROJECTS AND EVEN CONTROLS THE DESIGN OF NEW BUILDING ON PRIVATELY OWNED LAND. THE ZONING AND BUILDING REGULATIONS ADOPTED WITH THE CITY PLAN TEN YEARS AGO HAVE OPERATED TO PRODUCE ORDERLY, UNCONGESTED, AND ALMOST BLIGHTPROOF GROWTH. WELL-INTEGRATED HOUSING HAS BEEN BUILT FOR ALL INCOME GROUPS. ABOVE ARE SHOWN SOME OF THE MEDIUM-LOW RENT FLATS AT TRANEBERG AND BELOW IS A TYPE OF PREFABRICATED, OWNER - ERECTED HOUSE WHERE THE CITY LENDS NINETY PERCENT OF THE COST AS A MORTGAGE TO BE AMORTIZED OVER THIRTY YEARS. THE OWNER'S TEN PERCENT IS CONTRIBUTED IN LABOR IN CONSTRUCTION OF HIS HOME





HEREABOVE IS SOME MEDIUM RENT HOUSING DONE BY THE CITY AND BELOW IS A TYPE OF DELUXE APARTMENT BUILDING BUILT BY PRIVATE ENTERPRISE IN CONFORMITY WITH THE CITY PLANNING OFFICE'S REGULATIONS. THIS PARTICULAR EXAMPLE WAS DESIGNED BY STURE FROLEN AND CONTAINS A CINEMA, THE ENTRANCE TO WHICH IS SEEN ON THE CORNER. MANY DIFFERENT ARCHITECTS HAVE BEEN THE DESIGNERS OF HOUSING IN STOCKHOLM, YET UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE CITY ANY EXTREME INDIVIDUALISM HAS BEEN RESTRAINED. THE RESULT IS A PLEASANT UNITY AND AESTHETIC HOMOGENEITY. ATTENTION TO SITE-PLANNING AND LANDSCAPING IS OBVIOUS IN ALL THIS SWEDISH HOUSING WHICH IS WELL LOCATED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF BOTH NATURAL SETTING AND PARK AREAS OFFERING WOODLAND BEAUTY

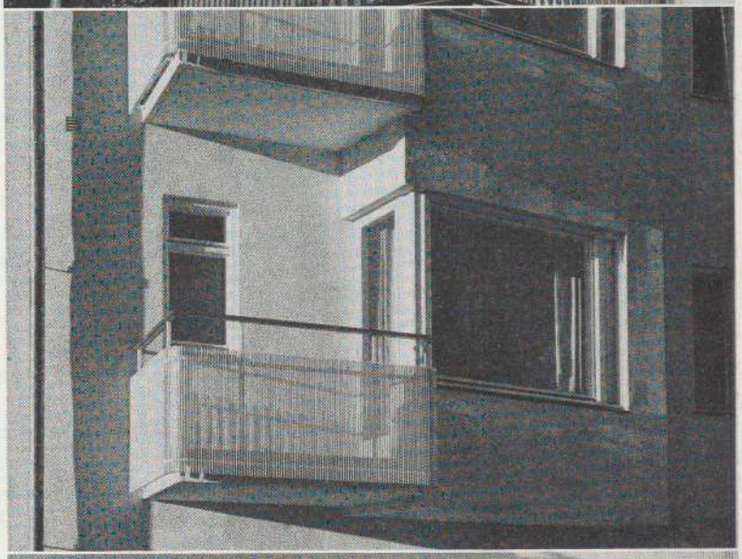




HOUSING AT GARDET, ONE OF THE LARGEST OF THE CITY-PLANNED DEVELOPMENTS IN STOCKHOLM



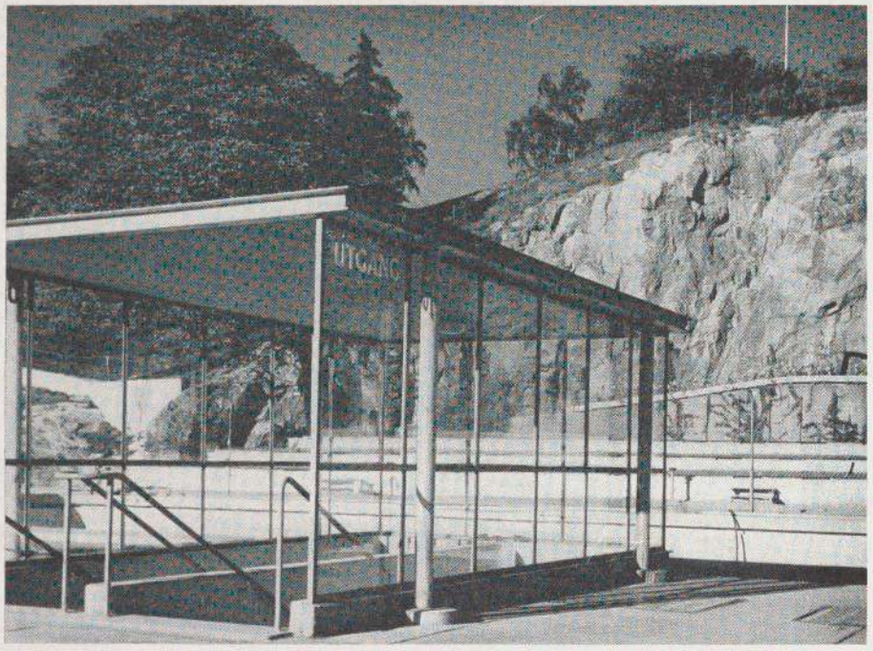






SWEDISH DESIGNERS ARE INVENTIVE AND SOMETIMES PLAYFUL IN DEVELOPING DETAIL, AS FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE APARTMENT HOUSE BALCONY TREATMENT AT THE TOP WHERE A DARK METAL RAILING IS BACKED UP WITH ORANGE CANVAS. WOOD BATTENS, CLOSELY SPACED, FLAT BANDS OF METAL, AND A NUMBER OF OTHER TYPES OF RAIL ARE COMMONLY USED FOR THE OMNIPRESENT BALCONY. AN INTERESTING DOOR DETAIL SHOWN AT RIGHT HAS THE RICH SIMPLICITY THAT COMES WITH GOOD DESIGN AND COMPARABLE CRAFTSMANSHIP

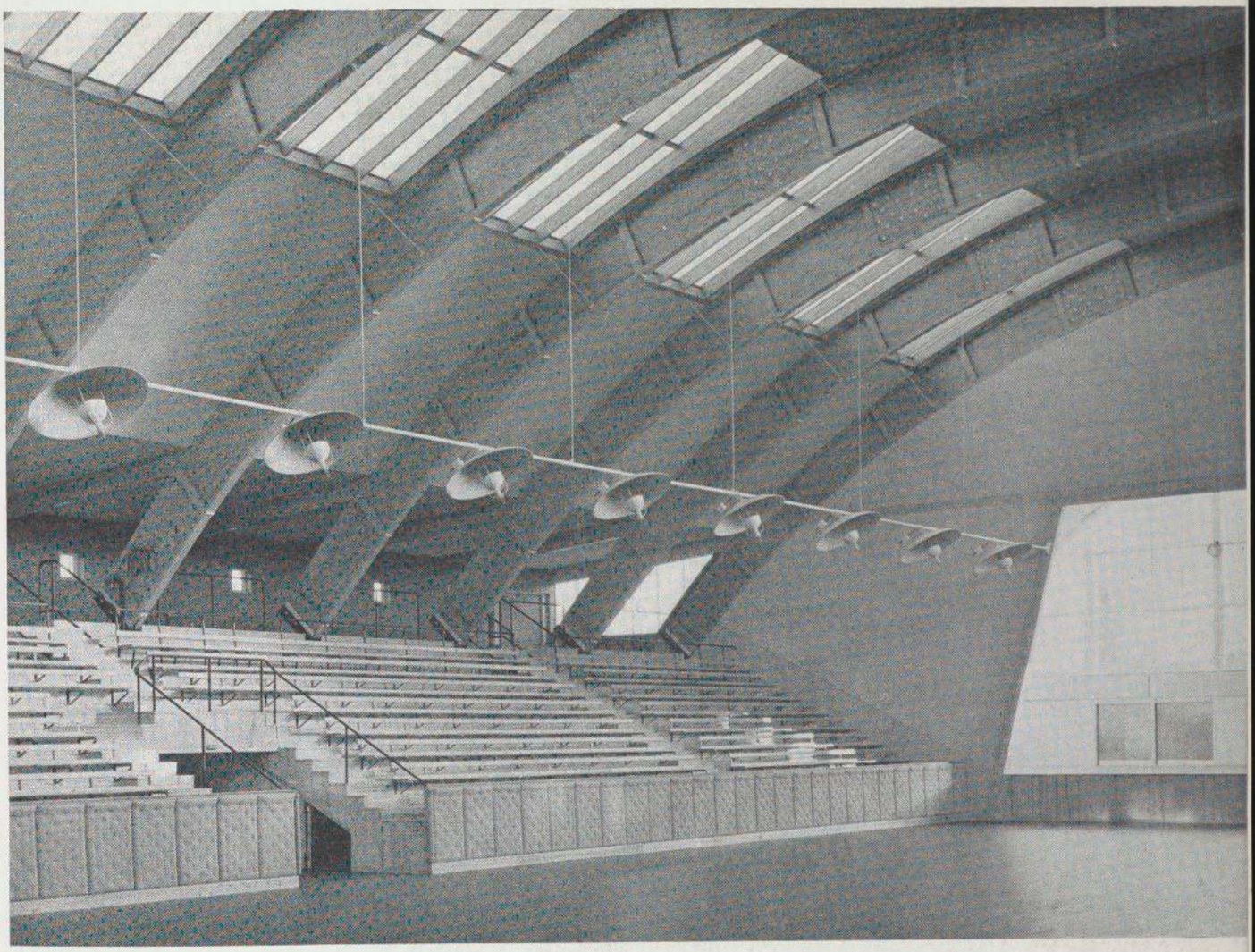




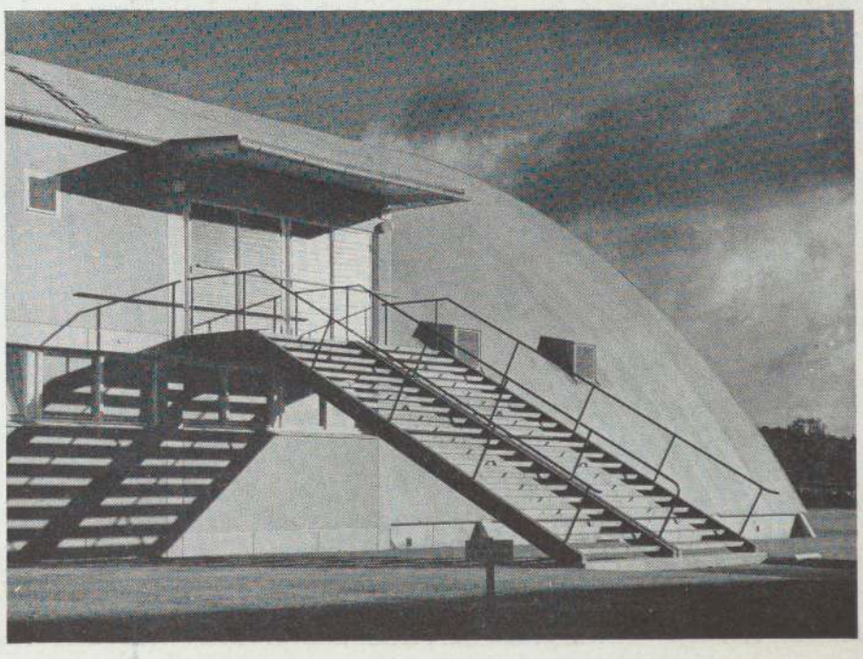
VANADISLUNDEN SWIMMING POOL DESIGNED BY PAUL HEDQUIST. THIS IS A PUBLIC POOL IN THE CENTER OF AN OLD RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT. ITS SITE IS AN OLD ROCK QUARRY. THE POOL IS ON THE UPPER LEVEL WHENCE ONE DESCENDS THE ENCLOSED STAIR SHOWN HERE TO THE DRESSING ROOMS BELOW.

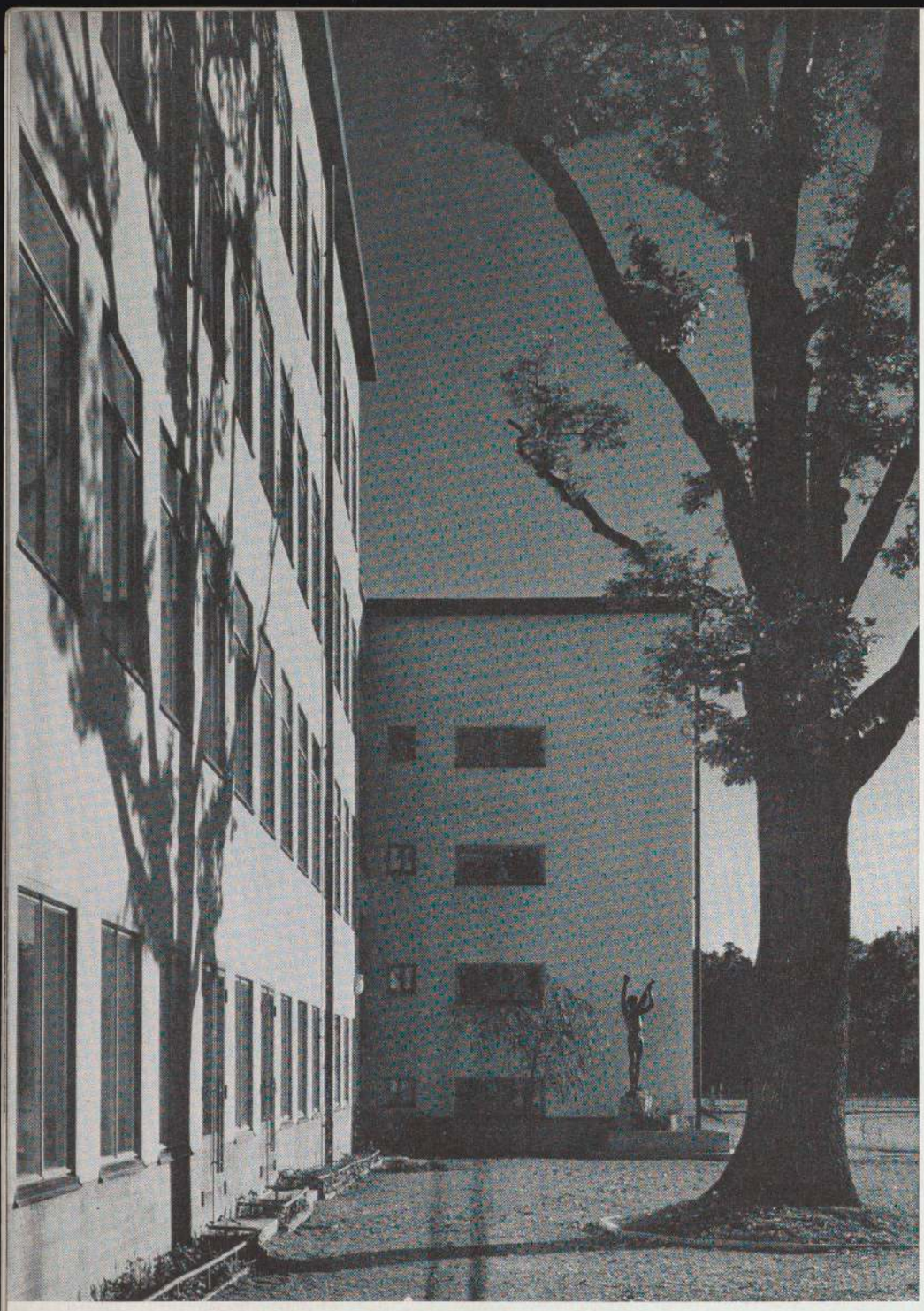
FROM THE STREET ONE LOOKS UP AT THE AIRY BALCONIES OF THE RESTAURANT THAT FORMS PART OF THE ESTABLISHMENT. THE POOL IS ENORMOUSLY POPULAR IN ITS PARK-LIKE SURROUNDINGS AND IS FORTUNATELY EQUIPPED TO TAKE CARE OF THE NEEDS OF AS MANY AS 1800 PERSONS AT ONE TIME



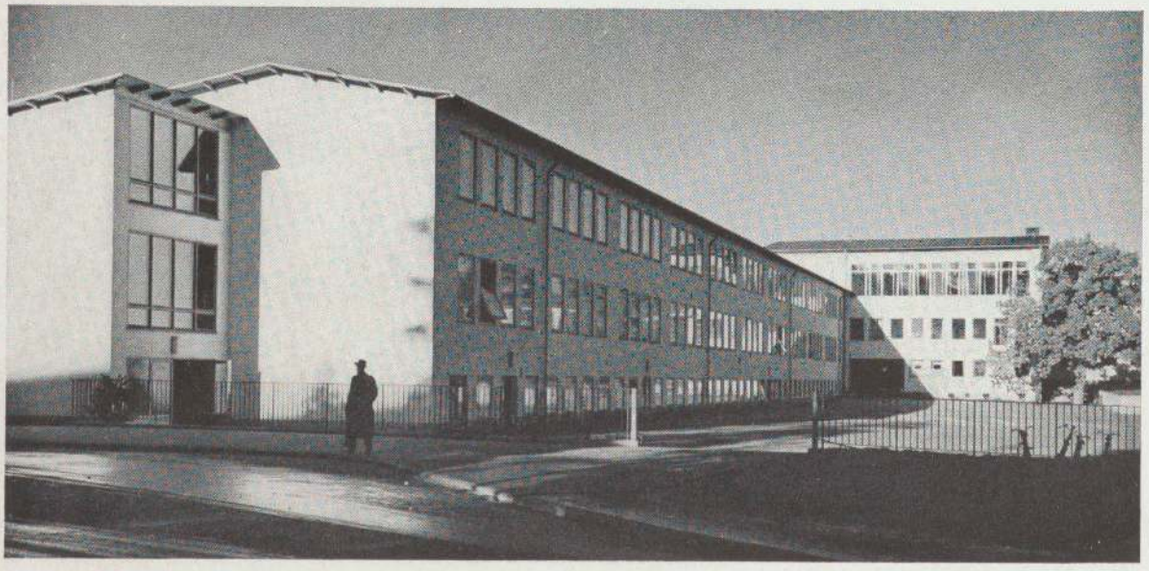


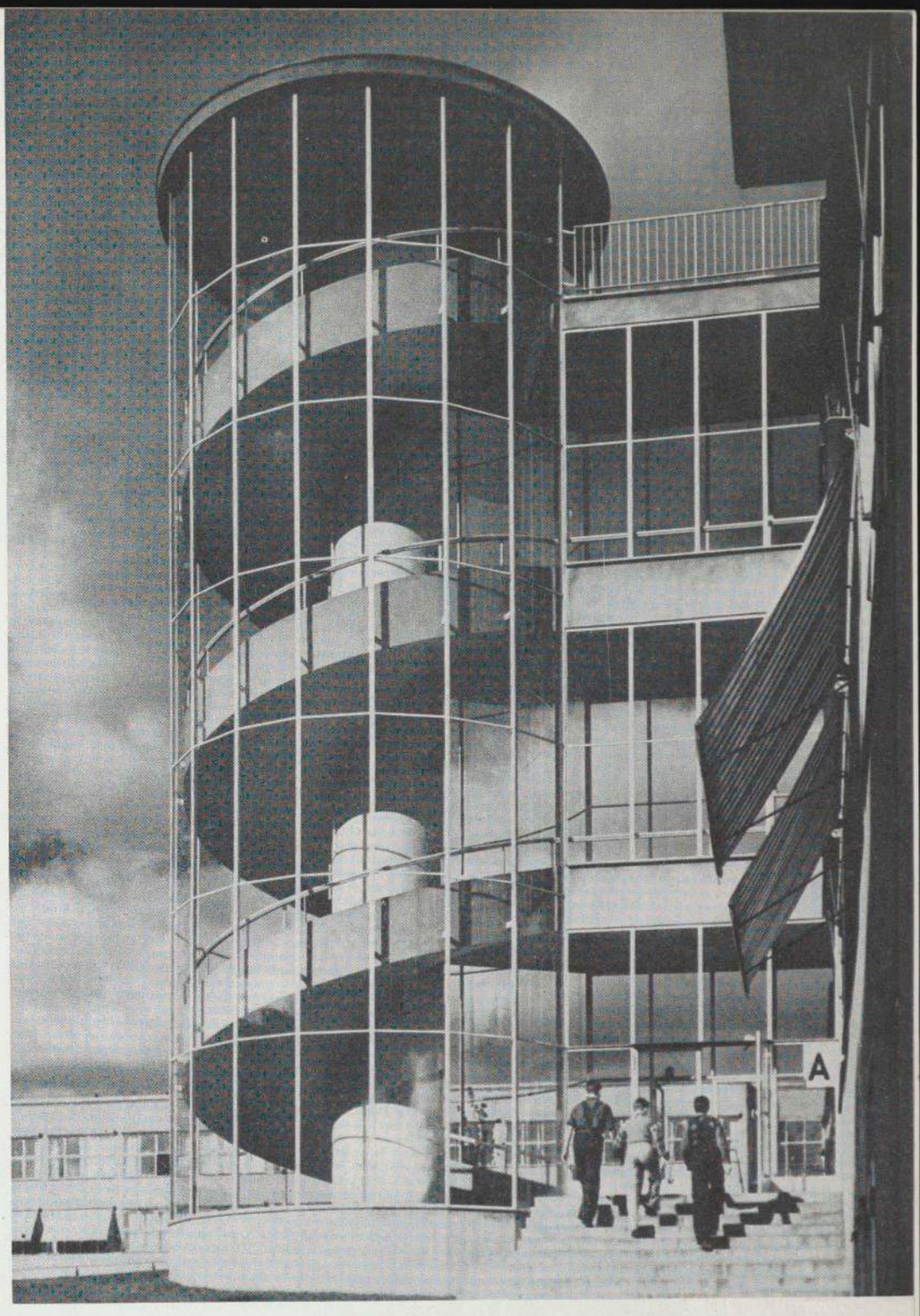
A PUBLIC TENNIS HALL BY AHRBOM AND ZIMDAL IS A PART OF A LARGE SCHOOL GROUP. IT IS ALSO AVAILABLE FOR CONCERTS AND PLAYS WHICH ARE PRESENTED FROM THE STAGE AT THE END. NOTE THE PROVISION FOR LIGHTING THE FLOOR FOR GAMES AT NIGHT AS WELL AS DURING THE DAY. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ROOF WITH ITS LAMINATED WOOD ARCHES IS INTERESTING AS AN EFFICIENT USE OF THE NATIVE MATERIAL. UNOBSTRUCTED SPACE, HIGH ENOUGH FOR LOBS, IS THEREBY PROVIDED IN AN ECONOMICAL MANNER. AN ATHLETIC FIELD ADJOINS THE BUILDING



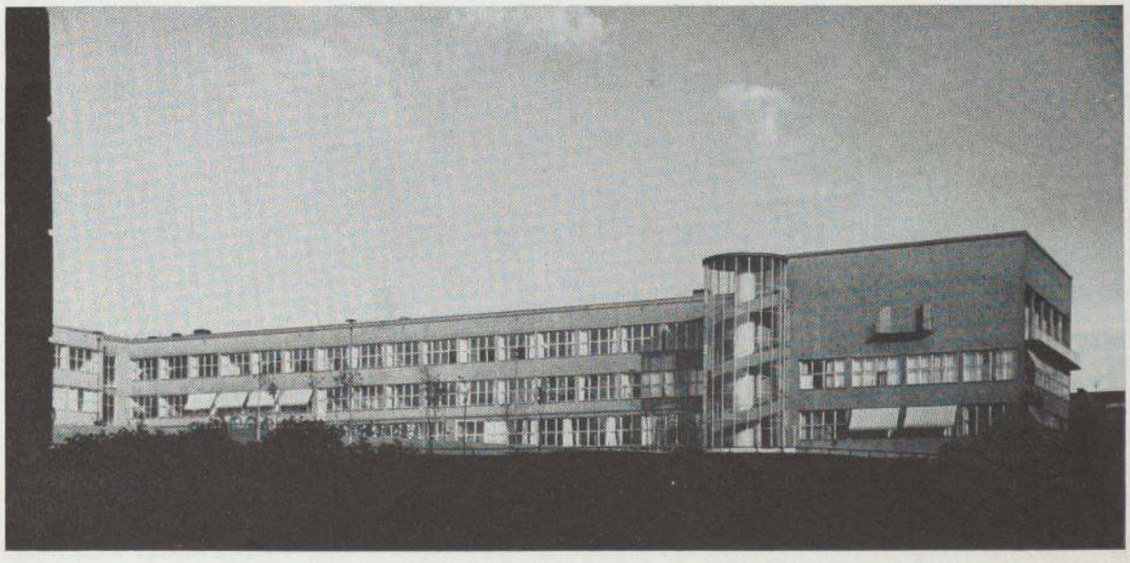


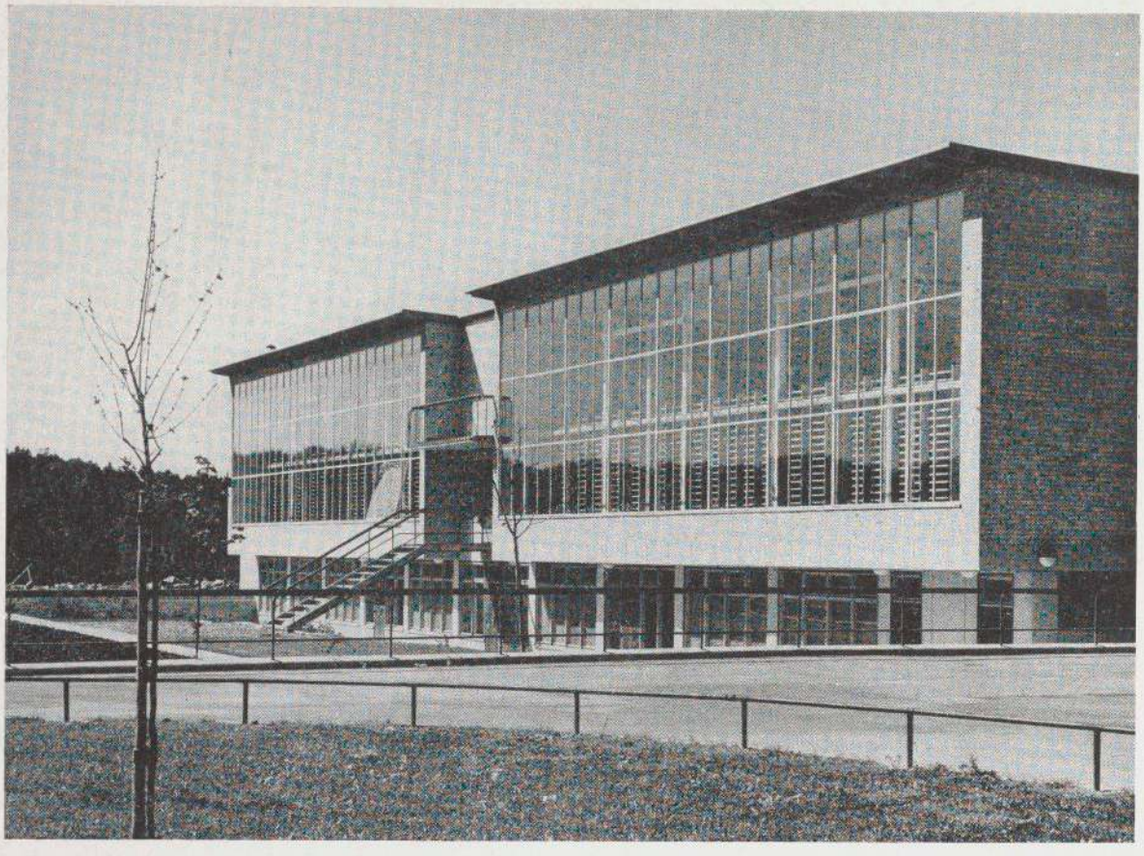
PAUL HEDQUIST HAS BEEN THE ARCHITECT FOR MANY OF THE BEST MODERN SCHOOLS TO BE FOUND IN STOCKHOLM. AT THE LEFT IS A VIEW LOOKING OUT FROM THE MAIN ENTRANCE HALL OF HIS BROMMA HIGH SCHOOL. HERE THE WALLS OF THE BUILDING, A WELL-PLACED STATUE, AND A FINE OLD TREE MAKE A CAREFULLY CONSIDERED COMPOSITION. BELOW, IS THE FREDHALL SCHOOL, ALSO DONE BY HEDQUIST. ITS LOW-PITCHED ROOFS AND CLEAR DEFINITION OF BUILDING MASSES ACCORDING TO USE, MAKE THIS ONE OF THE PLEASANTER AND MOST CHARACTERISTIC OF STOCKHOLM'S SCHOOLS. THE BUILDING IS ADROITLY SCALED TO THE SIZE OF ITS YOUTHFUL PUPILS



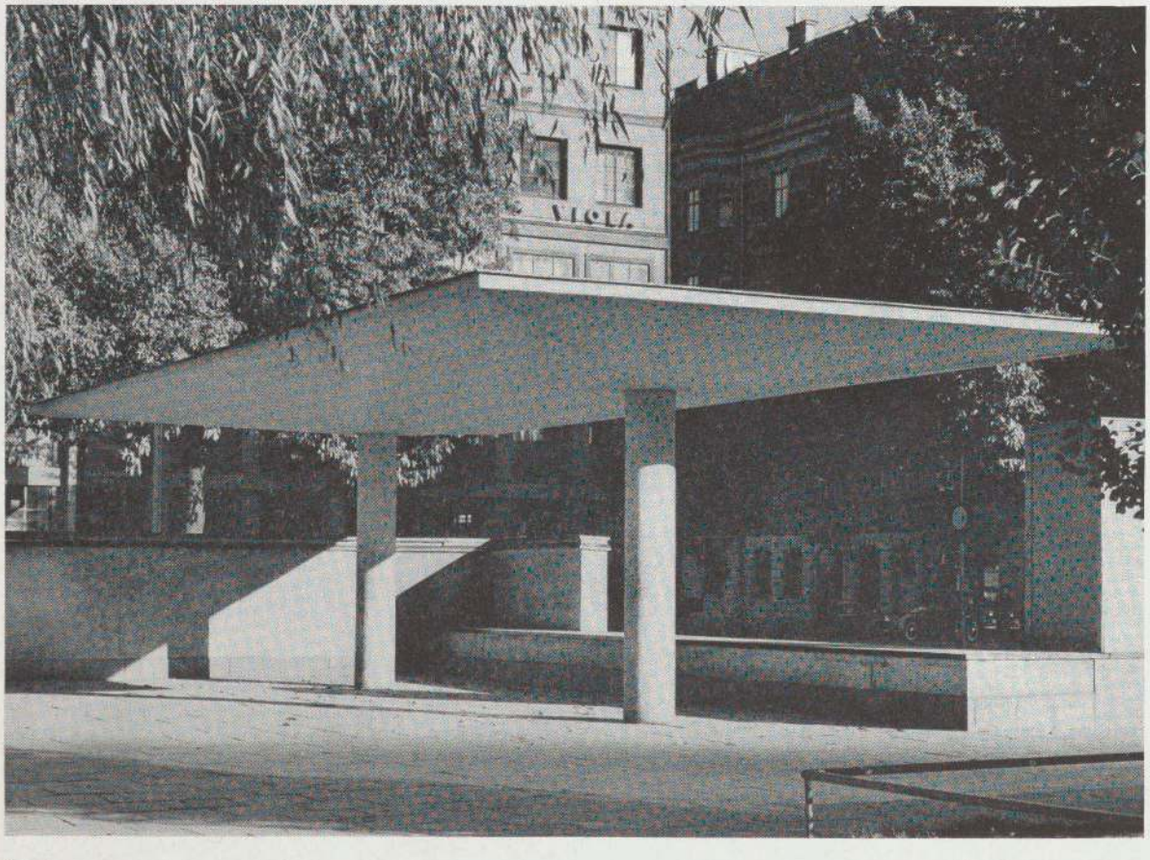


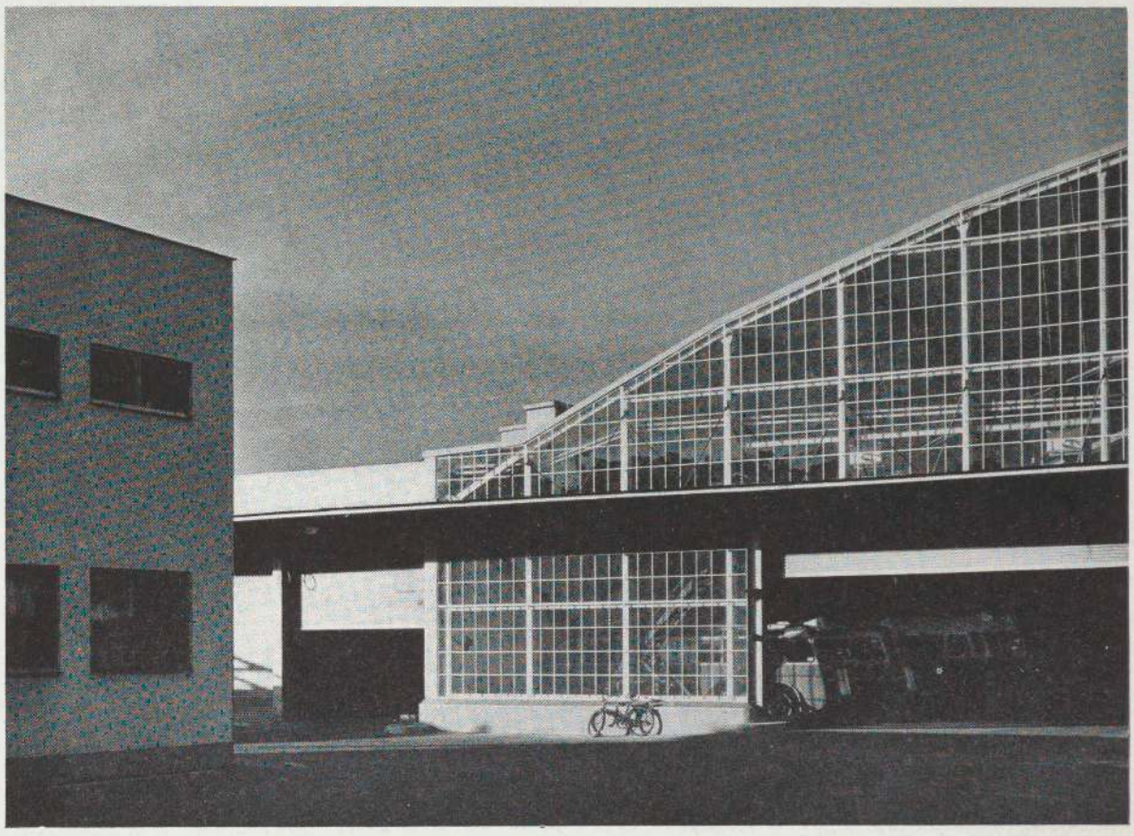
THIS TRADE AND COMMERCIAL SCHOOL BY ARCHITECT HEDQUIST IS DISTINGUISHED BY THE PRECISE AND SOMEWHAT EXTRAVAGANT SPIRAL STAIRCASE THAT GIVES ACCESS TO THE BUILDING BETWEEN THE CLASSROOMS AND THE AUDITORIUM AND OFFICE UNIT. THE FULL WIDTH OF EACH CLASSROOM IS GLASS, ASSURING BETTER LIGHT THAN IS USUAL IN CITY SCHOOLS IN THIS COUNTRY. ALL SORTS OF INDUSTRIAL "PROFESSIONS" ARE TAUGHT HERE FROM AUTOMOBILE DESIGN TO HAIRDRESSING. WHATEVER AESTHETIC EFFECT THERE IS IN ALL THESE SCHOOLS COMES FROM THE CLEAN RECTANGULAR LINES, THE GROUPING, AND THE REGULAR RHYTHM OF WINDOWS



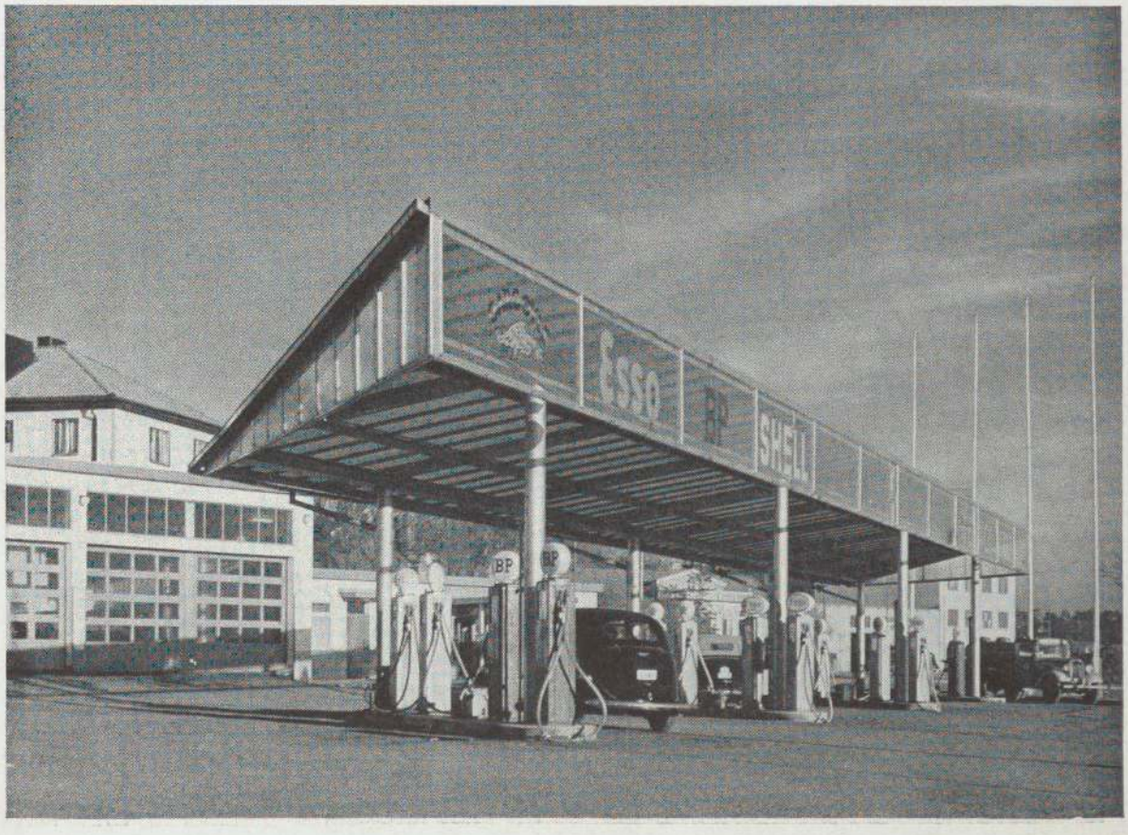


THE SWEDES USE GLASS WITH GREAT FREEDOM AND SKILL AS, FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE GYMNASIUM BUILDING FOR THE ERIKSDAL SCHOOL BY AHRBOM AND ZIMDAL. THIS SCHOOL PROJECT COMPRISES A NUMBER OF BUILDINGS, INCLUDING THE TENNIS HALL SHOWN SEVERAL PAGES BACK. BELOW APPEARS A WELL-STUDIED AND GRACEFUL TRAM SHELTER IN REINFORCED CONCRETE—SATISFYINGLY BEAUTIFUL





AN ADDITION TO THE BUS GARAGE FOR THE STOCKHOLM TRAMLINES ASSOCIATION, BY ESKIL SUNDAHL, IS A STRAIGHTFORWARD BIT OF FUNCTIONAL DESIGN WITH LONG SPAN STEEL ARCHES TO KEEP THE INTERIOR CLEAR OF OBSTRUCTIONS. IT IS MORE THAN JUST ENGINEERING FOR ONE FEELS THAT ITS DESIGNER WAS SENSITIVE TO FINE PROPORTIONS. THE SAME IS TRUE OF THE GAS STATION BELOW

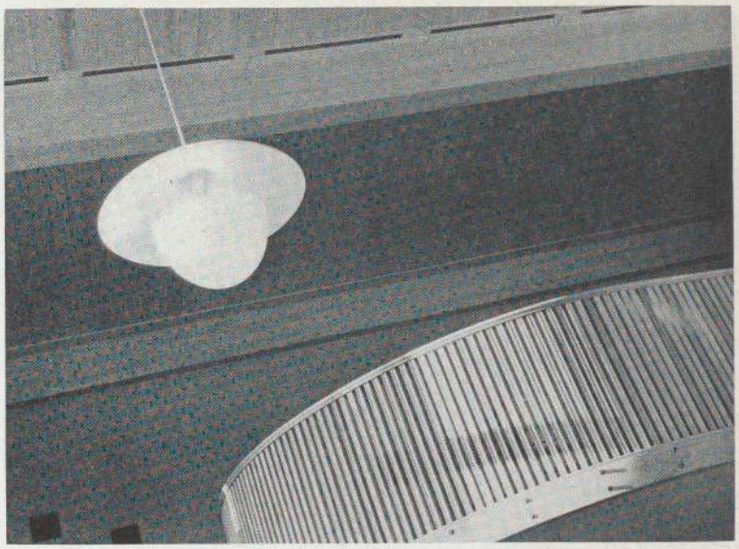


THE AUDITORIUM OF THE DRAKEN CINEMA, BY ERNST GRONVAL, ARCHITECT, IS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF THE WAY THE SWEDES USE THEIR TRADITIONAL BUILDING MATERIAL—WOOD. WALLS AND CEILING TOGETHER BECOME A SERIES OF STEPPED ARCHES, FACED UNIFORMLY WITH NATURAL FINISH WOOD STRIPS LAID LIKE HARDWOOD FLOORING. THE PLEASANT TEXTURE OF THE WOOD TAKES THE PLACE OF APPLIED ORNAMENT. NOTE THAT SOME OF THE SEATS ARE DOUBLE WIDTH TO HOLD TWO PEOPLE

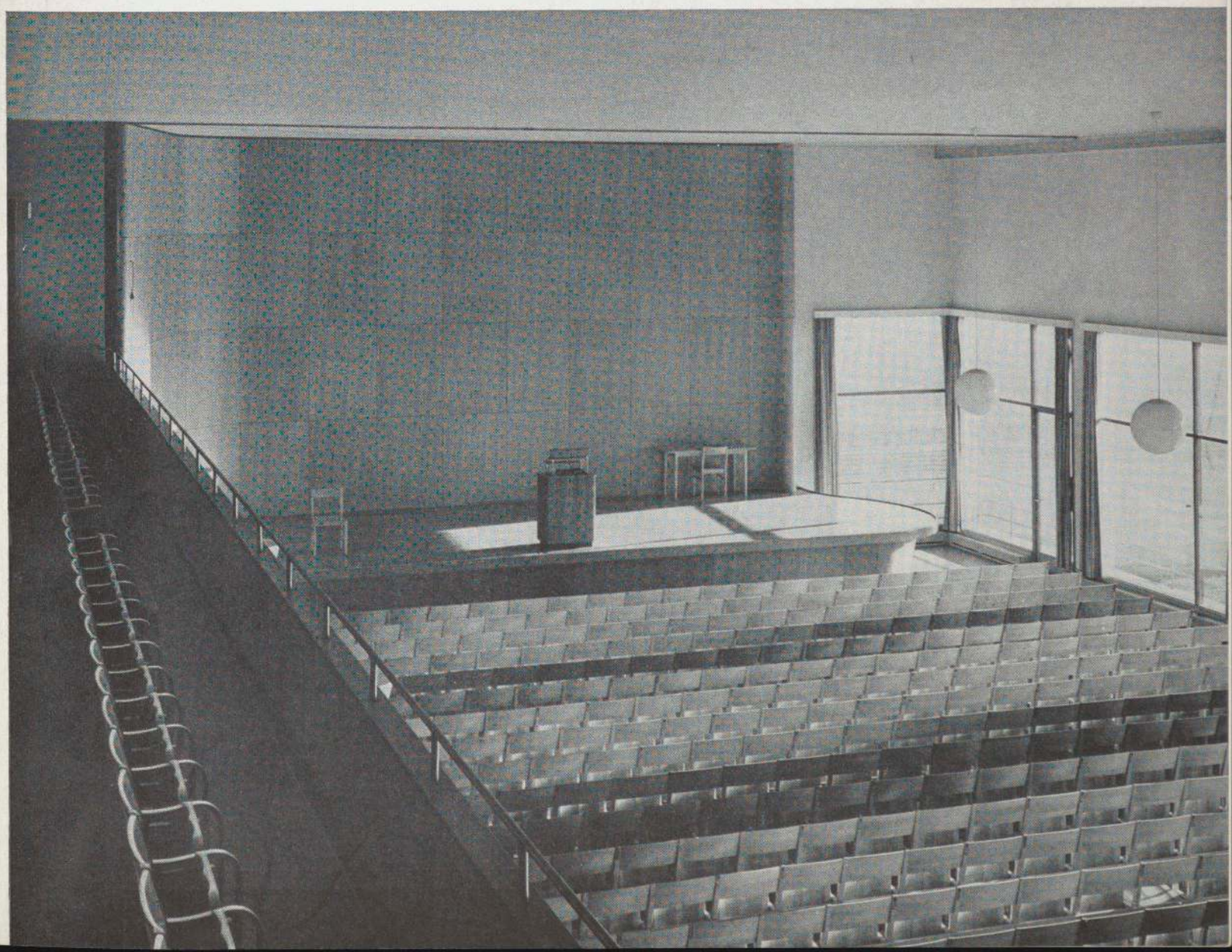


THE BAND SHELL IN SKANSEN, BY ARCHITECT N. E. ERICSON, IS SIMILAR IN CONSTRUCTION TO THE DRAKEN CINEMA. IT IS LOCATED AT THE OPEN AIR MUSEUM WHERE A COLLECTION OF NATIVE WOOD BUILDINGS FROM ALL OVER SWEDEN ARE ON EXHIBITION. BOLD STRUCTURE, ACOUSTIC FORMS, AND SIMPLE TEXTURES PRODUCE THE EFFECT

CHARACTERISTIC HANDLING OF WOOD IS SEEN IN THIS DETAIL FROM THE FREDHALL SCHOOL OF PAUL HEDQUIST. THE AUDITORIUM CEILING BEAMS ARE REAL BEAMS, FINISHED NATURAL WITH THE CEILING BOARDS. SLOTS FOR VENTILATION APPEAR OVER THE BEAM. THE BALCONY RAIL IS OF A COMMON ENOUGH TYPE



THE REMARKABLY SUCCESSFUL AUDITORIUM OF THE SOUTHERN COMMUNAL HIGH SCHOOL DESIGNED BY PAUL HEDQUIST IS PICTURED BELOW. NOTICE THE FREELY CURVING WOOD FORMS AND SURFACES OF THE PLATFORM AND THE WOOD WALL BEHIND IT. THE CONTINUOUS STRIP OF WINDOWS IS CARRIED PRACTICALLY DOWN TO FLOOR LEVEL TO INCREASE THE FEELING OF OPENNESS. OUT OF A FEW SIMPLE ELEMENTS, THE DESIGNER HAS MADE A COMPOSITION DIRECT, UNCLUTTERED, AND UNFORCED





IN TAKING LEAVE, SO TO SPEAK, OF THE SWEDISH SCENE, IT IS FAIR TO LOOK BACK FOR A MOMENT AT THE HISTORIC BACKGROUND AGAINST WHICH ALL THE MODERN WORK IS GROWING UP. HERE IS THE RIDDARHOLM CHURCH, WHICH IS THE "WESTMINSTER ABBEY OF SWEDEN" WHERE HER HEROES ARE BURIED. THE FINE ROMANTIC BEAUTY OF ANOTHER DAY IS STILL THERE TO BE APPRECIATED—NOT COPIED