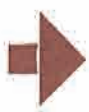


the case study house program



Because most opinion, both profound and light-headed, in terms of post war housing is nothing but speculation in the form of talk and reams of paper, it occurs to us that it might be a good idea to get down to cases and at least make a beginning in the gathering of that mass of material that must eventually result in what we know as "house—post war".

Agreeing that the whole matter is surrounded by conditions over which few of us have any control, certainly we can develop a point of view and do some organized thinking which might come to a practical end. It is with that in mind that we now announce the project we have called THE "CASE STUDY" HOUSE PROGRAM.

The magazine has undertaken to supply an answer insofar as it is possible to correlate the facts and point them in the direction of an end result. We are, within the limits of uncontrollable factors, proposing to begin immediately the study, planning, actual design and construction of eight houses, each to fulfil the specifications of a special living problem in the Southern California area. Eight nationally known architects, chosen not only for their obvious talents, but for their ability to evaluate realistically housing in terms of need, have been commissioned to take a plot of God's green earth and create "good" living conditions for eight American families. They will be free to choose or reject, on a merit basis, the products of national manufacturers offering either old or new materials considered best for the purpose by each architect in his attempt to create contemporary dwelling units. We are quite aware that the meaning of "contemporary" changes by the minute and it is conceivable that each architect might wish to change his idea or a part of his idea when time for actual building arrives. In that case he will, within reason, be permitted to do so. (Incidentally, the eight men have been chosen for, among other things, reasonableness, which they have consistently maintained at a very high level.)

We will try and arrange the over-all plan so that it will make

fairly good sense, despite the fact that building even one house has been known to throw a client off balance for years. Briefly, then, we will begin on the problem as posed to the architect, with the analysis of land in relation to work, schools, neighborhood conditions and individual family need. Each house will be designed within a specified budget, subject, of course, to the dictates of price fluctuation. It will be a natural part of the problem however to work as closely as possible within this budget or give very good reasons for not being able to do so.

Beginning with the February issue of the magazine and for eight months or longer thereafter, each house will make its appearance with the comments of the architect—his reasons for his solution and his choice of specific materials to be used. All this predicated on the basis of a house that he knows can be built when restrictions are lifted or as soon as practicable thereafter.

Architects will be responsible to no one but the magazine, which having put on a long white beard, will pose as "client". It is to be clearly understood that every consideration will be given to new materials and new techniques in house construction. And we must repeat again that these materials will be selected on a purely merit basis by the architects themselves. We have been promised fullest cooperation by manufacturers of products and appliances who have agreed to place in the hands of the architects the full results of research on the products they intend to offer the public. No attempt will be made to use a material merely because it is new or tricky. On the other hand, neither will there be any hesitation in discarding old materials and techniques if their only value is that they have been generally regarded as "safe".

Each architect takes upon himself the responsibility of designing a house which would, under all ordinary conditions be subject to the usual (and sometimes regrettable) building restrictions. The house must be capable of duplication and in no sense be an individual "performance".

All eight houses will be opened to the public for a period of from six to eight weeks and thereafter an attempt will be made to secure and report upon tenancy studies to see how successfully the job has been done. Each house will be completely furnished under a working arrangement between the architect, the designer and the furniture manufacturer, either to the architect's specifications or under his supervision.

This, then, is an attempt to find out on the most practical basis known to us, the facts (and we hope the figures) which will be available to the general public when it is once more possible to build houses.

It is important that the best materials available be used in the best possible way in order to arrive at a "good" solution of each problem, which in the over-all program will be general enough to be of practical assistance to the average American in search of a home in which he can afford to live.

We can only promise our best efforts in the midst of the confusions and contradictions that confront every man who is now thinking about his post war home. We expect to report as honestly and directly as we know how the conclusions which must inevitably be drawn from the mass of material that these very words will loose about our heads. Therefore, while the objective is very firm, the means and the methods must of necessity remain fluid in order that the general plan can be accommodated to changing conditions and conceptions.

We hope to be able to resolve some part of that controversy now raging between those who believe in miracles and those who are dead set against them. For average prospective house owners the choice between the hysterics who hope to solve housing problems by magic alone and those who attempt to ride into the future piggy back on the status quo, the situation is confusing and discouraging. Therefore it occurs to us that the only way in which any of us can find out anything will be to pose specific problems in a specific program on a put-up-or-shut-up basis. We hope that a fairly good answer will be the result of our efforts.

For ourselves, we will remain noncommittal until all the facts are in. Of course we have opinions but they remain to be proved. That building, whether immediate or far distant, is likely to begin again where it left off, is something we frankly do not believe. Not only in very practical changes of materials and techniques but in the distribution and financing of those materials lie factors that are likely to expand considerably the definition of what we mean when we now say the word "house". How long it will take for the inevitable social and economic changes brought about by the war years to affect our living standards, no one can say. But, that ideas and attitudes will continue to change drastically in terms of man's need and man's ability to satisfy that need, is inevitable.

Perhaps we will cling longest to the symbol of "house" as we have known it, or perhaps we will realize that in accommodating ourselves to a new world the most important step in avoiding retrogression into the old, is a willingness to understand and to accept contemporary ideas in the creation of environment that is responsible for shaping the largest part of our living and thinking.

A good result of all this then, would, among other things, be a practical point of view based on available facts that can lead to a measurement of the average man's living standards in terms of the house he will be able to build when restrictions are lifted.

We of course assume that the shape and form of post war living is of primary importance to a great many Americans, and that is our reason for attempting to find at least enough of an answer to give some direction to current thinking on the matter. Whether that answer is to be the "miracle" house remains to be seen, but it is our guess that after all of the witches have stirred up the broth, the house that will come out of the vapors will be conceived within the spirit of our time, using as far as is practicable, many war-born techniques and materials best suited to the expression of man's life in the modern world.

What man has learned about himself in the last five years will, we are sure, express itself in the way in which he will want to be housed in the future. Only one thing will stop the realization of that wish and that is the tenacity with which man clings to old forms because he does not yet understand the new.

It becomes the obligation of all those who serve and profit through man's wish to live well, to take the mysteries and the black magic out of the hard facts that go into the building of "house".

This can be and, to the best of our ability, will be an attempt to perform some part of that service. But this program is not being undertaken in the spirit of the "neatest trick of the week." We hope it will be understood and accepted as a sincere attempt not merely to preview, but to assist in giving some direction to the creative thinking on housing being done by good architects and good manufacturers whose joint objective is good housing.

—THE EDITOR.

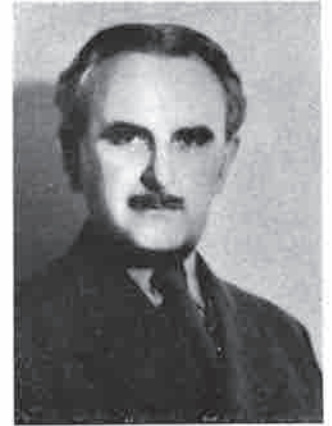
J. R.



Hella

DAVIDSON (designer) studied in Germany, England, and France. He came to the United States in 1923 and established private practice in 1925. He is recognized for the first modern designs of stores, restaurants, offices, single and multiple residences and interiors in Los Angeles and Chicago. He has been instructor at the Art Center School in Los Angeles since 1938. In 1937, he received recognition from the Royal Institute of British Architects; first prize winner in the Pittsburgh Glass Competition in 1938. His work has been published in *Deutsche Kunst & Decoration*, *Moderne Bauform*, *Nuestra Architecture*, *Architectural Record*, *The Forum*, *Arts & Architecture*, and *House & Garden*.

Los Angeles Municipal Airport. He has taught architecture both at the University of Southern California and at Scripps College. He is a fellow of the American Institute of Architects.



RICHARD J. NEUTRA was born in Vienna, Austria in 1892 and came to the United States in 1923 after having been in the practice of architecture in Europe. He has been in Los Angeles since 1926. Member of American Institute of Architects. He has practiced in California, Oregon, Texas, and Illinois. He was elected as the first American delegate of Les Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Modern and is now president of this world-wide professional organization. A city planner, housing expert and consultant, he is now architect and consultant to the Planning Board of the Insular Government of Puerto Rico.

The following architects have accepted commissions in cooperation with the Case Study House Program.



Park

SUMNER PAULDING, architect and city planner, was born in Ionia, Michigan, June 14, 1892. He attended the University of Michigan from 1911 to 1913, and received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1916. He has traveled and studied in Europe and in Mexico. He is the designer of many country estates; the Catalina Casino for William Wrigley Jr.; the men's campus at Pomona College, and he is chairman of the American Institute of Architects for the designing of Los Angeles Civic Center. He also worked with John C. Austin in the designing of the Los



SEERO SAARINEN of Saarinen and Swanson, was born in Kirkkonummi, Finland, in 1910, and came to the United States in 1923. Attended art school in Paris (sculpture), Yale School of Architecture, Yale Scholarship to Europe.

From 1936 to 1939 he did extensive city planning research and other architectural work. From 1939 to 1942 he was associated with Eliel Saarinen and Robert Swanson, building Crow Island School, Winnetka, Illinois. When associated with Perkins, Weiler and Wile, Tabernacle Christian Church, Columbus, Indiana, and Centerline Housing Project, Centerline, Michigan, were built. He has competed in several competitions, including the Smithsonian Gallery of Art Competition in which his entry was awarded first prize and first prize in Arts & Architecture's First Annual Architectural Competition. Now working for the Office of Strategic Services, Washington, D. C.



Sturtevant

W

WILLIAM WILSON

URSTER, of Wurster & Bernardi, born in California. 1895. Educated in the public schools of Stockton, later entered the University of California, spending his vacations working in the office of an architect. After travel abroad he returned to New York, working with the architectural firm of Delano & Aldrich. Returned to California in 1924 and entered private practice. In 1943 Mr. Wurster closed his architectural office in order to devote his time to war and postwar architectural problems, doing special research on Urbanism and Planning. Carried on this research at Harvard as a Fellow in the graduate school of design. Now Dean of the School of Architecture and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

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CHARLES AMES, born in St. Louis, Missouri. Studied architecture in St. Louis and Washington Universities. Travelled abroad. Practiced architecture and industrial design in the Middle West. Developed the Experimental Design Department of Cranbrook Academy of Art, working with Eliel Saarinen. Won two first awards in the Museum of Modern Art's Organic Design Competition. He is identified with the war effort through the development of his process for moulding wood and the design of essential items and the techniques for their manufacture.



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RALPH RAPSON was born in 1915. He spent two years at Alma College, Alma Michigan, and three years at the College of Architecture, University of Michigan. He received a scholarship at Cranbrook Academy of Art and studied architecture and civic planning under Eliel Saarinen. Co-winner of first prize for Festival Theater and Fine Arts Building for William and Mary College Competition. Prize winner in Ladies Home Journal Small House Competition; Owens-Illinois Small House Competition; Owens-Illinois Dairy Competition; Kawneer Store Front Competition; 1938 Rome Collaborative. He was co-designer of the "Fabric House" and the "Cave House." His work has been chiefly in the residential field and in housing. He is now head of the Architectural Department at the Institute of Design in Chicago. Member of C.I.A.M. In addition to architectural practice he is also designing furniture for several manufacturers.